UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION POLICY IN ALBERTA: LEADERSHIP AND CONTINUITY

by

Michael Garry Wagner ©

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1998

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ABSTRACT

After being re-elected in 1993, the Progressive Conservative government of Ralph Klein initiated an ambitious program of deficit-cutting and neo-liberal restructuring. Every government department was affected. The Department of Education had its budget cut, and a number of significant changes were made in education policy. The number of school boards was drastically reduced, the provincial government assumed control of the tax base previously reserved for school boards, and charter schools were introduced for the first time in Canada. Other changes were also made. This gave some observers the impression that the Klein government was making a substantial change with the education policy of its predecessors.

However, this thesis demonstrates that the Klein government's education policy exhibits a large degree of continuity with the policy of previous PC governments. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the government of Peter Lougheed had begun to undertake new initiatives in many areas of education policy. These initiatives amounted to a notable break with the earlier pattern of education policy in the province. These initiatives set a direction for education policy that continued through the period of Don Getty's premiership and culminated in the education policy changes of Ralph Klein's government. Thus there has, in fact, been a considerable degree of continuity in education policy from the Lougheed to the Klein period.

It is argued that the education policy initiatives of the late 1970s and early 1980s were largely due to the efforts of three individuals: Premier Peter Lougheed, Minister of Education Dave King, and Deputy Minister of Education Reno Bosetti. Their vision for an improved education system in Alberta created the impetus for change and provided the direction of education policy that would continue into the future. This demonstrates the important role that leadership can play in public policy, and helps substantiate the validity of the state autonomy thesis in public policy.

DEDICATION

To Dr. Reno Bosetti

Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world,
is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.

Thomas Carlyle (1840)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank each of the men who generously granted me an interview for this research: Dr. Reno Bosetti, Hon. Robert Clark, Hon. Jim Dinning, Dr. David Flower, Hon. Halvar Jonson, Dr. Bernie Keeler, and Hon. David King.

Secondly, I would like to thank Prof. Allan Tupper who played a crucial role in preparing the groundwork for this project, and who guided me away from fruitless lines of research.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Jim Lightbody, who always read my drafts promptly, and ensured that I could complete the project quickly by providing input at important junctures, and otherwise encouraging me in my work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine education policy (that is, basic education, not post-secondary education) under Progressive Conservative governments in Alberta. It does this through two levels of analysis. First, it compares education policy under Premier Klein with that of Premiers Lougheed and Getty in the period 1971 to 1996. The purpose of this analysis is to see whether the changes implemented by Ralph Klein differ from his PC predecessors in degree or in kind. Does Klein's policy fundamentally represent change or continuity? That question leads to the second level of analysis which deals with the related question: why was Klein's policy different from, or the same as, Lougheed's and Getty's? What is the reason for the change or continuity? These questions can be answered through an examination of legislative and non-legislative changes in education policy (to determine whether there has been change or continuity), as well as interviews and media analysis (to examine why policy changed or remained essentially the same).

This thesis has two hypotheses, one for each level of analysis. The first hypothesis is that education policy under Klein represents continuity with the past rather than radical change. The popular view of Klein as introducing radical innovations in education is, generally speaking, wrong. To a large degree he followed the course set by his predecessors. The second hypothesis is that this continuity is best explained by the fact that a new policy direction was ambitiously set under the Lougheed administration as a result of a new perspective being brought to education policy by his PC government. In other words, by the late 1970s the PC government was taking education policy in a direction that distinctly set it apart from the previous Social Credit government. Although there are a number of influences on education policy, including stakeholder groups and public opinion, change in Alberta's education system since the late 1970s has been primarily incremental and in a consistent direction. By the late 1970s the government of Premier Lougheed was developing a vision of what Alberta's school system should look like, and the implementation of this developing vision carried through the Getty and Klein administrations. The development of this new vision can be attributed primarily to high level officials, especially Premier Lougheed himself, Education Minister Dave King, and Deputy Minister of Education Reno Bosetti. Although others contributed, particularly other education ministers, the evidence suggests that these three men carried the bulk of the responsibility for the changes that were made.

THE AUTONOMY OF THE STATE IN PUBLIC POLICY

This emphasis on the role of particular government officials reflects an approach to political science that emphasizes the autonomy of the state as a political actor. Generally speaking, there has been a recurring debate in the discipline of political science between "society-centred" and "state-centred" approaches to explaining political phenomena (Pal 1994, 39). This is a broad theoretical concern that affects many different aspects of the discipline, but it is relevant here because of its implications for public policy. The analysis presented here provides further evidence for the validity of the state-centred approach.

Early in the twentieth century political science was dominated by a focus on the political institutions that comprised the state. After the Second World War, however, the focus switched from the state to society, so that by the 1960s the role of the state was neglected (Pal 1994, 42). From the society-centred perspective, "public policy is understood primarily as a response to the expectations, demands, and pressures of those who control the largest proportion of especially effective resources" (Nordlinger 1981, 3). The desire for certain policy changes arises from within society, and the state simply translates those desires into policy. By the late 1970s, challenges to the virtual hegemony of the society-centred view emerged. In the 1980s, the most prominent challenger was Theda Skocpol who "led the charge against society-centred and especially Marxist theorizing by stressing the institutional autonomy of the state" (Pal 1994, 45). As the title of one of her famous articles suggests, she was "Bringing the State Back In" to political analysis. Her focus was on "state autonomy" which she defines this way: "States conceived as organizations claiming control over territories and people may formulate and pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society." This is important because "Unless such independent goal formation occurs, there is little need to talk about states as important actors" (Skocpol 1985, 9).

In Canada, Alan Cairns has also advocated the need to acknowledge "the degree of autonomy possessed by governments" (Cairns 1988, 144). Although his work in this area primarily concerns the impact of federalism, rather than the formation of public policy, the point is essentially the same. "It is abundantly clear that the massive impact of government on society at the output stage does not require a prior massive impact of society on government at the input stage" (Cairns 1988, 154). Thus states are important political actors that engage in independent goal formation, and pursue those goals.

With specific reference to public policy, Eric Nordlinger differentiates between three different types of "state autonomy explanations." "Type I state autonomy explanations are those in which state-society preferences diverge, with public officials being neither successfully pressured into translating societal preferences into public policy nor dissuaded by the threat of societal sanctions from acting upon their own." In Type II state autonomy explanations, "State-society preferences are at first divergent. Public officials then purposefully bring about a shift in societal preferences to make them congruent or consonant with their own, followed by the translation of their now nondivergent preferences into public policy" (Nordlinger 1981, 29).

> Type III state autonomy explanations are those in which state-society preferences are nondivergent and the state acts upon its preferences. Although there are good

> reasons for interpreting Type III cases in a society-centered manner, with the state acting on its preferences because of societal support or nonopposition, the reasons for viewing them as state-centered accounts are at least as persuasive (Nordlinger 1981, 29).

"Nondivergent" means that either the preferences of private actors converge with those of the state, or they are indifferent to state preferences. For Nordlinger, in this case state preferences have "at least as much explanatory importance as societal preferences." However, when nondivergence exists states often take action to reinforce it, and this gives added reason to see the state as being motivated by its own preferences. "When public officials purposefully forestall the emergence of divergent societal preferences so as to continue to act on their own, state-centered explanations must surely be assigned additional importance in interpreting the adoption of public policies under conditions of nondivergence" (Nordlinger 1981, 84). The point is, of course, that it is not necessary to demonstrate that the state acted contrary to the preferences of society in order to suggest that the state acted autonomously.

This thesis argues that deliberate changes were made to important aspects of Alberta's education policy based on the preferences of certain high level state officials. The evidence suggests that the preferences were held by these individuals independent of significant societal pressures to have them implemented. For example, Premier Lougheed was the driving force behind changes to the secondary education program, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter. This points to the autonomy of the state as a political actor.

INCREMENTALISM AND INNOVATION

Another theoretical issue that needs to be clarified at the outset is the distinction between "incrementalism" and "innovation." Since this thesis argues that there was a break in the direction of education policy under the Lougheed administration, and then basic policy continuity from that point through the Klein administration, it is necessary to discuss how it is possible to distinguish the "break" (innovation) from the continuity (incrementalism).

The term "incrementalism" can be used to describe a pattern of public policy or a method of analysis, and in this case it is used exclusively to mean the former. A major theorist of incrementalism, Charles Lindblom, defines that meaning of the term this way: "In its core meaning incrementalism *as a political pattern* is easy to specify. It is political change by small steps (regardless of method of analysis). So defined, incrementalism varies by degree" (1979, 517). Lindblom provides examples to demonstrate this point.

> Raising or lowering the discount rate from time to time is extremely incremental. Making the original decision to use the discount rate as a method of monetary control is still modestly though not extremely incremental. Reorganizing the banking system by introducing the Federal Reserve System is still incremental, though less so. Eliminating the use of money, as both the Soviets and the Cubans aspired in their early revolutionary years, is not incremental. Where the line is drawn is not important so long as we understand that size of step in policy making can be arranged on a continuum from small to large (1979, 517).

As this last sentence points out, the distinction between incrementalism and innovation in policy making is based more on a judgement call than on a clear and objective benchmark.

In this thesis the concept of incrementalism is generally expressed by the term "policy direction." It is argued that the direction of education policy changed under Lougheed (that is, the Lougheed administration introduced education policy innovation), and that direction continued through the Klein period (i.e., education policy changed incrementally after the Lougheed innovations). So how was this judgement made?

As in Lindblom's discussion, it is necessary to introduce some examples to clarify the distinction between incrementalism and innovation. Four areas of education policy are covered in detail in the thesis to demonstrate its core argument. The strength of the case for incrementalism is not the same in each area. The strongest case is the area of education policy studied in Chapter 7, where it is shown that the Lougheed administration made a number of legislative and regulatory changes that dramatically expanded the range of alternatives for schooling outside of the traditional public education system. Lougheed's administration made this break with the past, whereas Klein's administration made a small step (relative to the Lougheed changes) to expand the range of alternatives (i.e., charter schools). The weakest case may be in the area of governance and funding policy covered in Chapter 4, where it is shown that the Lougheed administration made changes in its own deliberate policy relatively late in its period, and it was this latter policy that continued under Klein. In some respects it wasn't the policy per se that changed, but the direction that the government wanted to go with the policy that changed. For example, government documents and proposals during the 1980s envisioned the provincial government taking a larger share of the tax resources at this time reserved exclusively for school boards. While it is true that the actual policy in this area did not change until Klein came to power (and thus it could be argued that he made an innovation in this area), in this thesis that choice will be viewed as an incremental change because the government's desire for this policy change was clearly indicated (and almost implemented to some degree) years earlier. That is, in this case the innovation is in the "direction" of policy that occurred earlier, and as this direction is followed over time (through government documents and proposals), it culminates in the changes under Ralph Klein. While this is not as strong a case for continuity and incrementalism as the other areas discussed in the thesis, the continuity in the direction that the government wanted to go is still evident. The innovative break had begun after the 1971 election.

THE VIEW OF KLEIN AS MAKING A MAJOR CHANGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

Premier Klein's education policy changes have been widely interpreted as being very significant. The government has fostered this view to some degree. The Three-Year Business Plan itself states: "The changes outlined in this plan will alter substantially the character of the education system and ensure a bright future for our students" (Alberta

Education 1994a, 3). However, those who emphasize the dramatic nature of the changes are generally critical of them. There are both popular and academic sources that agree that Klein's policies "will alter substantially the character of the education system." Most of these critics see the government as beginning to privatize the education system, which, indeed, would be a substantial alteration of it. Privatization of education is seen to fit within the Klein government's broader agenda of neo-liberal restructuring wherein the role of government in society is significantly reduced.

Officials of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and publications of that organization are a consistent source for the view that the education policy of the Klein government differs considerably from its predecessors and constitutes major change. The Secretary of the ATA, Julius Buski, spells this view out clearly:

> On June 24, 1993, our Association celebrated the 75th anniversary of its incorporation. During those 75 years we have worked towards and achieved, among other things: major improvements in a public education system which provides quality and equality of access; adequate funding for education; high teacher preparation standards, professional status for teachers; and an adequate level of compensation and protection for our members. It is ironic therefore that scarcely more than a week before the above anniversary date Albertans elected a government which appears intent on reversing many of these gains. It is also clear that the ruling party is not of the same ideological bent as that of the same name which came to power in 1971 (Buski 1994, 30).

High level ATA officials alleged that the Klein government had launched an "attack" on education. In fact, in the view of the ATA's president, "The government's actions are more than an attack on schools' roles, teachers' jobs and children's futures -- they are attacks on the basic tenets of democracy that are the backbone of this country" (Mackay 1994c, 33). Privatization was seen as a key component of this attack: "The government plan is to privatize . . . Charter schools and the hidden voucher system (funding following the student), along with centralized taxation, clearly point toward privatization" (Mackay 1994c, 33). Buski also focused on this theme, noting that "charter schools are the thin edge of the wedge in privatizing education" (Buski 1995b, 30).

When the government released its Three-Year Business Plan in February 1994, the ATA's president, Bauni Mackay, had strong words criticizing it, noting her view of how drastic a change it constituted. After saying some aspects of the plan were okay, such as school board amalgamation, she said that

> there are several strategies, such as charter schools and budget reduction, that clearly indicate not only a restructuring of education but also a restructuring of Alberta as we know it today.
>
> This is clearly a plan to diminish, if not destroy, the public education system in this province. This is clearly a plan for a two-tiered or even a multi-tiered education system. This is clearly a plan to destroy the legacy passed on to us by our parents and grandparents. This is clearly a plan to create a situation that violates a basic tenet of democracy, which is equal opportunity for all children to realize their dreams, regardless of who their parents are. This is not a renovation but a plan for revolution (Mackay 1994a, 1).

In a subsequent article she alleged that "Public education is seriously threatened by the kind of change infecting our province" (Mackay 1994d, 31). There is no question, then, that the ATA saw the Klein education changes as substantially different from previous government policy.

Others have also picked up on the privatization aspect as a theme by which to criticize the Klein government's education policy. Journalist Mark Lisac notes that the business plan called for the creation of charter schools and mandatory school councils. In his view, these proposals "left the door open for an eventual manipulation of the school system away from public education and towards private schools" (1995, 191). In a similar vein, Barlow and Robertson write that "the proposals contained in the business plan lay the groundwork for a realignment of public education in the image and in the service of the marketplace" (1994, 220).

Some academic writing has the same thrust. After referring to the proposals for charter schools, the alleged deregulation of teachers' labour, and the possibility of privatizing custodial work and school management, Robertson et al state: "Together, these initiatives move the public provision of education firmly into the private sector"

(1995, 89). Furthermore, after referring to the purpose of charter schools as creating competition between schools and increasing choice for parents, they make the following comment about the Klein government's bill to amend the School Act: "In this sense, Bill 19 in Alberta does represent a clear step towards the privatization of schooling provision and, ultimately, differentiation among schools on the basis of parents' ability to pay" (Robertson et al 1995, 93).

Other academic writing has been more general in referring to the Klein government's education policies. Soucek and Pannu say that Klein's policies "could only be described as a vicious onslaught on Alberta schools" (1996, 44). Those policies are leading to "the progressive dismantling of the Alberta educational system" (Soucek and Pannu 1996, 57). In their view, the Klein government has "essentially an anti-educational agenda" (1996, 63). These comments are similar in tone to Robertson and Barlow who claim that Klein made the changes he did because he "found that education was a vulnerable target, ripe for takeover and weakly defended" (1995, 207).

There are at least two themes that can be drawn from these comments. The first is that, in some sense, education is under attack and that attack involves major changes to Alberta's education system. Something different is going on, something very negative in this view. It is sure not like the "good old days" of Premier Lougheed, to paraphrase some of Buski's comments above. Klein is, apparently, doing something new and drastic to "our" education system. In writing to defend Alberta's education system from Klein's attacks, the ATA's president stated that "the quality of education provided in today's classroom is the best it has ever been" (1994b, 31). Her fear was that Klein's policies would "destroy" this good system. Surely, then, she saw Klein's government as doing something dramatically different from before. Although the government was making more changes at one time than usual, it seems to be the content of the changes, not the fact that they were done together, that concerns the critics cited above.

The second major theme is that Klein's education policies are leading to the privatization of the Alberta education system. The introduction of charter schools is most often cited as the beginning of privatization, even though charter schools are public schools. In my view, it is ironic that privatization is emphasized in the critiques of the Klein government's policies. If there is any area of education policy where the PC government has clearly been consistent throughout its entire tenure, it is in its encouragement of private or quasi-private alternatives to public education. As will be demonstrated in chapter 7, the government has made numerous legislative, regulatory, and funding changes to encourage these kinds of alternatives since at least the mid-1970s. To allege that the Klein government is suddenly trying to encourage privatization of education is implausible in historical context. Indeed, there were once fears that the Lougheed government might privatize education. The March 1980 issue of the ATA Magazine carried an article entitled "Post-mortem On Public Schools." Although the article is a satirical account of the Deputy Minister of Education recounting to the Minister how and why the education system was privatized, the satire would be inexplicable if there were not real concerns about this prospect. There is no evidence of such a fear under the previous Social Credit government. This satirical memo, dated December 31, 1989, reads in part as follows:

> As you are well aware, Mr. Minister, the BNA Act gives exclusive jurisdiction over education to the provinces, but it does not require them to provide such service. You will recall, therefore, that at its last session our Legislature provided for the abolition of public education in Alberta (Chalmers 1980, 24).

Thus concerns about the direction of education policy under the PC government leading to the privatization of education in Alberta existed, for at least some people, by the middle of the Lougheed period. In spite of what was written by critics cited above, this is not something new to the Klein era.

CHANGE OR CONTINUITY IN PC EDUCATION POLICY?

This view that radical change to education has been initiated by the Klein government cannot stand up to detailed scrutiny. Certainly every government has unique features. But fundamentally, the changes brought about under Klein were not only consistent with what had occurred under both Lougheed and Getty, but actually brought to fruition trends that had begun under those previous administrations. To demonstrate this, my consideration of the broad area of education policy will be broken into four distinct categories: governance and funding; standards, testing, and curriculum; government relations with the ATA; and, school choice, this last category referring to policies related to private and quasi-private education.

Governance and Funding

Educational governance and funding were severely affected by the educational restructuring initiated by Klein's government. On the governance side, the number of school jurisdictions were dramatically reduced, provincial authority over the selection of school superintendents was reasserted, and school councils had their roles strengthened. On the funding side, the provincial government basically took control of all funding, pushing the local school jurisdictions virtually out of this function altogether. The affect of these changes was to transfer power away from the school board level. Much of the power accumulated at the provincial level, but some also went to the individual schools.

It would be accurate to say that in these areas of education policy the emphases of the Klein government are quite different from the PC government of the 1970s. During the 1970s the number of school jurisdictions actually increased due to government policy that encouraged new jurisdictions to form. School superintendents were selected by the jurisdictions alone. As well, the provincial share of education funding was decreasing while a greater share was coming from the local jurisdictions. There seems to be a stark difference, then, between the PC government of the 1970s and that of 1993 to 1996. However, it is important to realize that the change in direction in the areas of governance and funding did not occur in 1993 with the new Klein government, but in the early 1980s, while Lougheed was still Premier. The PC government itself realized the problems associated with its policies and noticeably, after 1982, a distinctly different approach was taken. On the governance level, the discussions involved in the writing of the new School Act (1988) made clear that the government was questioning the proliferation of school districts and was rethinking the selection of superintendents exclusively by the local jurisdictions. It was also during this time that the idea of allowing for parent councils at the school level was promoted. And with regards to funding, the government proposed that it would take over the collection and distribution of non-residential property taxes, although this move was successfully resisted by the wealthy school jurisdictions which would lose out. The point is this: while a clear line of policy direction cannot be drawn from the 1970s through the 1990s in the areas of governance and funding, a clear line can be drawn from the early 1980s through the 1990s. A distinct break did occur in PC government policy thinking, but that break began at least ten years before Klein became Premier. Thus in these areas it is possible to say that the policies of the Klein government were the culmination of a policy direction initiated under Peter Lougheed.

Standards, Testing, and Curriculum

Another area where the PC government shifted direction from its own policies during the Lougheed period was that of standards, testing, and curriculum. These three concepts can legitimately be linked together because educational standards are implemented through the curriculum, and then tests are used to see if the standards were met. At the time the PCs came to power in 1971, one of the most salient educational issues in Alberta was the continuing use of compulsory provincial exams, often referred to as "departmentals." While they had been in use throughout the province's history, by the late 1960s they were being increasingly challenged by education professionals, and the Social Credit government was beginning to decrease their role in the system. Clearly, the momentum was against the tests. In concert with this momentum, the PC government abolished departmentals in 1973.

By the mid-1970s evidence of growing public concern about a perceived decline in student achievement in the schools began to emerge. This concern was widely interpreted as a desire to go "back to basics" in the education system. A high-profile committee was established by the government to seriously study the effects of eliminating the departmentals, and to recommend whether or not they should be reinstated. In spite of the fact that the committee recommended against reinstating compulsory provincial exams, the government restored such exams anyway in the early 1980s. It was also during the late 1970s that the Lougheed government legislated the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta, which were portrayed as reflecting a back to basics perspective. The same label was placed on a Department of Education discussion paper released to encourage discussion of the goals of basic education. Thus by the late 1970s and early 1980s the Lougheed government's initiatives in this area of education policy were generally perceived as moving towards upgrading educational standards and reviving the traditional emphasis on provincial exams.

The economic downturn of the early 1980s led the Alberta government to re-evaluate its economic development strategy. Premier Lougheed began to speak about the need for Alberta to be more competitive in international markets, and the need for the education system to contribute to the province's competitiveness. The government released a White Paper in 1984 that described the government's economic plans for the rest of the decade, and part of that plan involved changes to the program of education offered in Alberta's schools. Also during 1984 the government initiated a major review of the secondary education program to fulfill the White Paper's proposals for education.

This review of secondary education involved considerable public input, and its discussion papers as well as the document outlining the results of the review were portrayed by the media as advocating a "back to basics" approach to education. The review initiated a "raising" of educational standards, through toughening the curriculum, in Alberta's secondary education program. This purported raising of standards was seen as necessary to improve the skills of Alberta's students and hence raise the quality of the province's workforce, making the province more competitive economically. Premier Lougheed's involvement in this process of changing an aspect of the province's education program was unprecedented for an Alberta Premier, and was recognized as such at the time.

The idea that Alberta's school system should focus on increasing student achievement in order to improve the province's economic competitiveness received renewed emphasis in 1991 with Minister of Education Jim Dinning's policy document entitled Vision for the nineties. It proposed a further raising of standards and increased emphasis on the use of exams to measure student progress. The following year a comparison of Alberta's education system with that of some European and Asian countries, jointly sponsored by the Department of Education and a business organization, recommended continued emphasis on these same themes. When Klein came to power, his government did not miss a beat in continuing this by now established pattern. The business plan for education issued by Klein's government stressed the need for high standards and testing, but rather than being something new, this clearly shows its continuity with education policy going back to the Lougheed years.

Government Relations With The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association is a large organization that has played an important role in the development of the school system, especially since the mid-1930s. As Minister of Education, William Aberhart did much to help the ATA achieve its goals for improving the status of teachers through compulsory membership in that organization and other employment benefits. This set the stage for a continued warm relationship between the Social Credit government and the teachers' union. Ralph Klein's government could not be said to have had a smooth relationship with the ATA. Indeed, popular accounts of his policies have suggested that Klein "attacked" Alberta's teachers and made them "scape goats" for problems in the education system. However, the change from a very positive relationship with the provincial government to a more adversarial relationship began to occur by the late 1970s, during the Lougheed administration. Once again, in this area of education policy the Klein government manifested continuity with its PC predecessors.

By the late 1970s the ATA was concerned about some of the PC government's education policies such as increased government control over curriculum development and the government's accomodation with the rise of religious private schools. This led to increasing friction between the association and the government. After Dave King became Minister of Education in 1979, however, conflict between the ATA and the government became particularly bitter. Much of this conflict was over control of teacher certification. Both the ATA and the Minister wanted changes to the system of teacher certification in Alberta, but they had strong disagreements as to how this should be done. King's efforts to make changes in this area, which were ultimately successful, led to public charges that he was trying to "destroy" the ATA. King was aided in his struggle with the ATA by the "Keegstra affair," in which a high school teacher accused of promoting hatred in his classroom was seen in certain circles to have been strongly defended by the ATA. This weakened the ability of the ATA to generate public support in its conflict with the government. The conflict in 1985 between the ATA and the government over a new body to oversee teacher certification was a very public affair, and resulted in a clear policy victory for the government. In 1987 and 1988 the ATA was very critical of aspects of the government's new School Act, especially those that enhanced the position of private schools in Alberta.

The educational restructuring undertaken by the Klein government once again led to a bitter public conflict between the government and the ATA. Teachers were forced to take a pay cut, and other aspects of the restructuring, especially the introduction of charter schools, were bitterly opposed by the ATA. Some PC MLAs went so far as to propose breaking the teachers' union into separate bargaining and professional organizations. But this strained relationship between the association and the government had clear precedent in the conflict during the Lougheed period. The PC government had a history of tension with the ATA long before Klein became Premier, so his conflict with the association represents a kind of continuity in PC policy.

School Choice

One of the most high profile aspects of Klein's educational restructuring was the introduction of charter schools. These are quasi-private schools in the sense that they are completely funded by the government but run independently of the regular public education system. These schools provide parents with a greater selection of schools to choose from for their children, and introduce a mild degree of competition into the system. A number of commentators, in both the media and academia, saw the introduction of charter schools to be a move towards the privatization of Alberta's public education system, as noted above. If this were true, charter schools would represent a remarkable break with previous education policy. However, the truth is that the PC government has been very open to private and quasi-private alternatives to traditional public education since its first term in power in the early 1970s. Charter schools are simply a logical extension of the emphasis on school choice that has been a hallmark of the PCs' education policy under all three premiers.

The continuity of PC education policy in this area is easy to demonstrate since there have been so many instances where the government has reaffirmed its support of choice in education. Among these instances are the following: the rise of religious private schooling during the 1970s led to a court case between the government and a Mennonite school that had been denied approval to operate. When the government lost the case, instead of appealing its loss (as the ATA and others wanted), the government changed the necessary legislation to accomodate the Mennonite school and the schools of other sects that were also beginning to operate. It was also during the 1970s that the government changed legislation to allow for "alternative schools," i.e., public schools that catered to a particular segment of the population. They flourished in Calgary for a few years, and have recently re-emerged in Edmonton. Another important development during the 1970s was the substantial increase in government funding to private schools. Although the Social Credit government began funding private schools on a small scale during its last term in power, the PC government dramatically increased the funding during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This led to considerable public controversy, and has continued to erupt on an occasional basis since then. A noticeable increase in the proportion of Alberta students attending private schools beginning in 1980 further elevated the issue of private schools in the public's attention. In 1983, the government commissioned a report on private schools to advise it on future policy, and this commission recommended tightening controls over private schools. The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, launched in the wake of the Keegstra affair, also recommended tightening restrictions. In spite of this advice and although the government did move (reluctantly) to deal with a number of unregistered private schools, when the new School Act was written the government maintained the considerable leeway accorded private schools. It also accomodated the growing number of home schoolers. In each of the various facets of the debate about private education, the government manifested an attitude favourable to private education, much to the chagrin of its critics. Indeed, in the School Act debates of 1988 Liberal education critic Sheldon Chumir once again suggested that the government was moving towards the privatization of the education system.

This same suggestion was made a number of times when the Klein government announced that it would allow the creation of charter schools. Although charter schools are not private schools as such, they are operated independently of the regular public school governance structure. This has been perceived by critics as an attack on the public education system by moving towards privatization. However, reviewing the history of the PC government's policy in the area of alternatives to traditional public education makes it clear that charter schools are a logical outgrowth of the path pursued by these governments. In light of the government policy pursued since the early 1970s, it would have been much more surprising if the government had not moved in the direction of charter schools.

After looking at a broad spectrum of education policies, then, it becomes apparent that the education policies of the Klein government are primarily in line with the direction of education policy in Alberta since the Lougheed period. Whether dealing with governance and funding, curriculum and testing, the relationship with the ATA, or the choice provided by alternatives to public education, Klein's policy was more a continued evolution in a consistent direction than a radical new plan. Certain individuals in the Alberta government, including Lougheed himself, had set the direction for education policy by the early 1980s, and the direction remained the same well into the 1990s. As of yet there is no evidence of a substantial change.

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND CHANGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

That being the case, what does it say about education policy? Why was Klein's policy basically a continuation or extension of previous policy directions? Who or what drives education policy? In this case the evidence suggests that policy was driven by high level politicians and a particular Deputy Minister of Education. Premier Lougheed and Education Minister Dave King (and to lesser degrees other education ministers) wanted changes in the education system, and they appointed Reno Bosetti Deputy Minister to help achieve their goals. In spite of the fact that Lougheed left office and King was replaced as Minister, the momentum of their education program continued right through the Klein period. When he came to power in 1971, Lougheed brought a new style of government to Alberta and his ambitious program eventually included making changes to the education system. Thus the real change in Alberta's education policy began in the 1970s under Peter Lougheed, not in the 1990s under Ralph Klein.

In contrast to the Social Credit government that it replaced, the new PC government of Peter Lougheed took a very activist role in the economy. In an effort to diversify the provincial economy, the government established some crown corporations, involved itself in mega-projects, and financially supported certain private corporations. Lougheed also reorganized the civil service, changed the way caucus operated, developed his own network to gather information, and decisively moved away from the tradition of selecting cabinet ministers who were experienced in the field of their portfolio. The general impression is that Lougheed was firmly in control of his government personally. His firm direction meant that he was also at least partially responsible for the direction of education policy.

During the Social Credit period there was a close relationship between educational professionals and the provincial government. This connection was broken with the election of the PCs in 1971, and a new relationship began to develop between the government and the education elite. The PC government viewed the educational community as being too influential in the direction of education policy, and wanted to re-establish itself as the central policy-making instrument in education. By the late 1970s the government was very active in making changes in the education system, including changing the way curriculum was developed, legislating provincial educational goals, and re-establishing provincial examinations. This activism continued into the 1980s. The changes that began with Lougheed represent the most significant government efforts in the area of education policy since William Aberhart was Education Minister.

Interestingly, teachers as an occupational group were relatively prominent in the Social Credit caucus, and even more so in cabinet. Teachers were the single largest occupational category in the cabinet throughout the Social Credit period. Such had not been the case under the previous Liberal and UFA governments where teacher presence in cabinets had been negligible. After the PC take over, teachers again were relegated to a relatively small role in cabinet. It is plausible that this difference in the relative importance of teachers in cabinet played a role in the PC government's change in education policy that began during the 1970s.

For the PC government, education was seen as a necessary component of its economic development strategy, a different educational ideology than the previous Social Credit government. To the Conservatives, an advanced and diversified economy required a skilled workforce. The main purpose of the education system was to supply the economy with the kinds of skilled indivduals that the economy demanded. This emphasis on the connection between school and the economy had not been prominent under Social Credit.

In sum, the switch from a Social Credit to PC government led to a noticeable change in education policy. Lougheed had a far different conception about who should make education policy, namely, members of the government, not members of the education profession. He also had a cabinet with a noticeably smaller proportion of teachers, and it is likely that he and his ministers had a somewhat different view of the relationship between education and the economy than the previous government. Thus it should not be surprising that once the PC government began to focus more attention on education policy, especially after its re-election in 1975, there would be a notable change. The change excellerated after Dave King became Education Minister in 1979, and received renewed impetus after Reno Bosetti was selected as Deputy Minister in 1982. Thus it was certain key people connected with the PC government who determined the new direction of education policy.

METHODOLOGY

Because this research attempts to examine the "big picture" in Alberta's education policy development, one narrow methodology would not be sufficient to marshall the necessary evidence. Different methodologies highlight different aspects of the whole. It becomes necessary for this research to be conducted eclectically. This involves the following: interviews with key actors in the education policy process during the period covered; an analysis of government documents explaining government policies and the public rationales for those policies; an analysis of legislative changes that enacted certain aspects of the government's program; and a review of the printed media (both the mainstream and education press) to develop a feel for public reaction and controversy that accompanied the government's policies.

The government documents and legislation provide a basic standard against which to base observations about the direction of education policy. Clearly, legislative action produces changes in the education system. Some education policy, however, is not rooted in legislation, and so analyzing educational legislation will fail to reveal these aspects of policy. Other documents, such as policy statements and discussion papers, do explain what these policies are and some of the reasons for their introduction. Together, these documents and the legislation would cover the official government stance with regard to education policy changes.

However, few people would be willing to accept that that would be enough to explain what was going on. The official government position is at least partly determined with a view to mollifying the public. Media accounts of the policy changes include critical perspectives from interest group representatives and other people who claim that there is more to the story than the government is offering to the public. As well, the media provide some assistance in determining how the public generally responded to policy changes. Thus looking at the print media broadens our perspective on what occurred in Alberta's education policy.

It is possible to go deeper yet and obtain the views of the most significant actors who took part in the events under study. Through interviewing these people, information is obtainable that is not available in any other form. In particular, the interviewees give their unique perspective of the role that they played, what was truly going on, and the impact that various factors had. Interviewing can then fill in the blanks left by the other sources of information, and verify or challenge conclusions drawn from printed sources.

Each of the PC ministers of education from 1975 to 1996 was asked for an interview. Lou Hyndman was excluded because there appeared to be relatively little attention paid to education policy during the PCs' first term in power. All of the former education ministers who agreed to be interviewed were interviewed. Robert Clark, the last Social Credit education minister, was interviewed for his impression of the changes (or lack thereof) in education policy that occurred after the PCs came to power. Deputy Minister Reno Bosetti was interviewed due to the widespread perception that he was a key player in education policy in Alberta. As well, two ATA officials were interviewed: Dr. Bernie Keeler, to gain perspective on the earlier period of the PC government, and Dr. David Flower, to establish that organization's perspective on the latter period.

Any one of the sources mentioned above would be insufficient on its own for a project such as this, so an eclectic approach is necessary.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is organized into nine chapters. The first, of course, is the introduction. The second provides a brief history of Alberta's education system since before provincehood, and continues up to the PC period of the early 1970s. It focuses on the most salient features of this history. With respect to educational governance, the major issue was the need to consolidate school jurisdictions as a way of improving the financial basis of the jurisdictions. Educational standards and achievement began to take on more significance as a public issue after the introduction of progressive education into Alberta's school system in the late 1930s. After an initial period of conflict between teachers and the Liberal and UFA governments, the Social Credit government brought about the "golden age" of the ATA, as one observer put it. The degree to which the Social Credit government allowed the ATA to cooperate in the development of education policy suggests a corporatist relationship between the two. In other words, the ATA had a highly institutionalized relationship with the government that gave it legitimacy in contributing to policy development (Presthus 1973, 24-28). The central issue related to school choice in the Alberta school system during this period had been settled in 1905 with constitutional provision for separate schools for the Catholic or Protestant minority in any community. Also noteworthy are the two royal commissions on Alberta's education system, the Cameron Commission that reported in 1959, and the Worth Commission that reported in 1972. The rewriting of the Alberta School Act in 1970 is also an important event in the historical background leading up to the PC government. With this historical information, the stage is set for an analysis of the PC government's education policy.

Chapter three discusses the election of the PC government in 1971 and the effects that had on policy generally, but especially education policy. It shows that the PC government soon became an activist government, in contrast to the relatively passive Social Credit government, and that this activism carried over into the field of education policy. Although the ideological differences between the Social Credit and PC governments were not substantial, the styles of governing were, especially in their attitudes towards education policy. While the Social Credit government generally deferred to educational professionals in education policy, the PC government consciously and explicitly moved to reduce the influence of educational professionals by reasserting the authority of the Legislature in this area. It is not unlikely that the relative importance of teachers in the Social Credit and PC cabinets made a difference on this point. It is also plausible that the PCs had a greater tendency to see the education system as an aspect of the economy, contributing workers who could fill the positions necessary for economic diversification.

Chapter four looks at governance and funding, noting how the PC government shifted direction during the Lougheed period, and set the course that would be followed by Klein's government. Chapter five does the same for the area of curriculum and testing. Chapter six shows that the Lougheed government had noticeable conflict with the ATA, setting a precedent for the bitter relations between the Klein government and the teachers' union. Chapter seven gives a detailed account of the PC government's favourable policies towards private and quasi-private education since its first term in power. Chapter eight looks at possible objections to the thesis, and demonstrates that they cannot be sustained. Finally, the conclusion ties these various elements together, emphasizing the role of Peter Lougheed, Dave King, and Reno Bosetti in establishing the education policies of the PC government. It is argued that this provides strong evidence for both state autonomy in policy making and the underlying continuity sustained by Premier Klein.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ALBERTA'S EDUCATION POLICY

While the topic of this thesis is education policy after 1971, it would not be possible to understand the significance of the Conservative government's policy without having an idea of what had occurred before it came to power. As a result, some specifics of the historical background of Alberta's education system must be considered. Four themes will be followed in the analysis of PC education policy, but the origin of these four themes can be found in the province's education history. On top of the four themes, three significant postwar policy events must also be considered.

One theme was already evident in the controversy surrounding the education system that was to exist in Alberta when it achieved provincehood. The central issue in this conflict was between those who wanted one form of public school for all children, and Roman Catholics who wanted separate schools for their children. There is a sense, then, in which this issue can be classified as an issue of "school choice." A longer lasting conflict was that over the working conditions of teachers and the status of their union. This clearly fits within the category called "ATA." A third important issue that confronted the province's education system was the consolidation of school districts and the creation of larger units of educational administration. This was an issue of "governance." As to the content of education, Alberta became a battleground over "progressive education," with critics of that methodology claiming that Alberta's education standards had dropped too far. Thus this is a case of controversy over "standards" and curriculum. On top of these themes, no discussion of this period of Alberta's education history would be complete without a look at the Cameron Commission of 1957-1959, the rewriting of the School Act that occurred in 1970 (and set the legislative stage for education during the early years of the PC administration), and the Worth Commission of 1969-1972, the report of which was released early in the PC period. Together, these themes and events provide a superficial, but necessary, background to the educational issues faced by the PC government.

THE ALBERTA ACT AND SEPARATE SCHOOLS

Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces in 1905, having been carved out of what was then the North-West Territories. The form the school systems of these two new provinces would take was one of the two most controversial issues in the creation of these provinces, the other being the continued control of their natural resources by the federal government. The controversy about the school system lay in whether the Roman Catholic minority would be able to opt out of the public school system and have their own schools. This had been an issue for many years in the Territories, and was resolved in favour of limited educational rights for Roman Catholics. In an important sense this can be seen as a dispute about alternatives to the public school system, or a form of school choice.

The first legislation regarding schooling in the North-West Territories was included in the North-West Territories Act passed by the federal government in 1875. The Territories were governed directly by Ottawa, and a dual system of schools was set up whereby Protestants and Catholics each had their own schools (Bercuson 1995, 3). This was followed by the ordinance of 1884

> which established an educational system for the Territories under the control of a Board of Education, permitted the minority in any district to establish a separate school and assess themselves for its support. The Board functioned in two sections and each, Roman Catholic and Protestant, exercised exclusive supervision over such matters as the management and inspection of schools, examination and licensing of teachers, and selection of textbooks (Brennan 1980, 50).

This situation was quite satisfactory to the Roman Catholic minority which was able to have its children educated in schools which it controlled.

However, this situation was not satisfactory to a large number of English-speaking Protestants who saw the Roman Catholic schools as fostering division in the Territories. Most Protestants desired a single system of what were called "national schools" which were "public schools designed to inculcate a common set of 'national' (i.e., British/Canadian) values" (Bercuson 1995, 5). In this view it was necessary for non-Anglo elements to be assimilated into Anglo-Canadian culture. This would provide the cultural homogeneity that was believed essential to a stable and peaceful society. Thus it was argued that the French-Canadians in the North-West Territories (and later European immigrants) should be compelled to attend a single system of national schools so that they would become "Canadianized" and not pose a threat to Canada's British identity (McDonald 1977, 65-66).

In 1891 the North-West Territories Act was amended by Parliament to allow for an Executive Committee of the North-West Territories to conduct much of the Territories' affairs. The chairman of the Committee was Frederick Haultain, who was bitterly opposed to the dual school system (McDonald 1977, 60-61). Thus in 1892 new school legislation was passed, transferring complete control of the schools to the territorial legislature. The Board of Education was replaced by a Council of Public Instruction which had four voting members, all of whom were also members of the territorial government. "Thus, in 1892 Protestant and Roman Catholic schools as such ceased to exist in the Northwest and were replaced by a single system of public schools" (Bercuson 1995, 6-7).

The legislation did, however, allow for separate schools. A minority of one of the two main religious groups could form schools where desired and assess minority ratepayers to support the separate schools. But this form of "separate school" was quite different from what had existed before since their "distinctive character" was eliminated; they became essentially just like the other public schools, with only a few comparatively minor differences (Bercuson 1995, 7-10).

By this time, there was similar conflict over the school system in Manitoba. In 1890, the Liberal government of Thomas Greenway "abolished both the official use of the French language in the province and the dual system of separate denominational schools" (Morton 1979, 4). To a large degree, this was done out of the belief, as in the North-West Territories, that a heterogenous population with many immigrants needed to be melded into a uniform nationality through a "national" school system. A considerable degree of controversy resulted from the Manitoba government's action, which didn't come to an end until 1896 when the Laurier-Greenway compromise was reached whereby optional religious classes were allowed as well as bilingual instruction where numbers warranted. However, education remained a political issue in Manitoba until 1916 when even bilingual instruction was abolished due to its perceived threat to a common Canadian nationality (Morton 1979, 4-10).

In 1901 a new School Ordinance was adopted for the North-West Territories. This ordinance "replaced the Council for Public Instruction with a Department of Education headed by a member of the government" (Brennan 1980, 50). It also confirmed the existing school system. A public school system would exist for the Territories, but in areas where a local Protestant or Roman Catholic minority desired a separate school they could establish one and assess fellow minority members for its support (Bercuson 1995, 10-11). This was the system as it existed when discussions began to establish the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The initial legislation for Alberta's provincehood introduced into Parliament set off a storm of controversy.

> The Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, and the other western Liberal members agreed to include in the draft of the autonomy legislation a clause perpetuating the educational system in its existing form, but the school clause in the legislation presented to the House seemed designed to restore the privileges which the Roman Catholics had lost in successive amendments of the Territorial school law. This Sifton could not accept, and he resigned from the cabinet in protest (Brennan 1980, 51).

There was also considerable public controversy both in the Territories and Ontario about the "school question." Sifton himself wrote a revised draft clause which he gave to Laurier and was presented to cabinet. This clause was accepted by the government in spite of opposition to it from some officials of the Roman Catholic Church. The new clause was modified so "as to guarantee only the educational system as it existed in 1905" (Lupul 1974, 185). In other words, separate schools would only receive the rights and privileges that were established under the 1901 School Ordinance (Lupul 1974, 185-186). Sifton was successful in achieving his goal to preserve the existing school system.

Bercuson summarizes the outcome as follows:

> (1) the 1905 Alberta Act continued the system that was in place in 1901; (2) the 1901 system had confirmed the existence since 1892 of a single state-controlled and state-regulated "national" school system in the territories; (3) since there was only one school system, and since all the schools in it, "public" or "separate," were state-controlled and, therefore, "national" schools, there was no discrimination against separate schools as to the grants monies they received from the government or the right of separate school ratepayers to tax themselves to support *their* "national" schools (1995, 23-24).

This is the system as it has continued to exist until today.

Thus the greatest controversy about education in Alberta's early history had to do with whether all children would have to attend a single public school system or whether there should be an alternative for an important religious minority (and what form such an alternative would take). In the end, a compromise between the two positions was adopted: a form of alternative schooling was allowed, but it was subject to government control as strict as the regular public schools and was subject to the same regulations.

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

One of the key players in education policy has been the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) which was established in 1917. For the first two decades of its existence, the provincial government was largely indifferent or even hostile to it. But with the victory of the Social Credit party in 1935, the ATA made great strides in accomplishing its goals, and continued to have a rather favourable relationship with the government until the Progressive Conservatives came to power. While it was not uncommon for the ATA to have problems with the government for much of its history, its relationship with the Social Credit government stands out as a period of relative calm, and, indeed, of great success for the ATA, especially in the earliest years of that government.

Before a teachers' union existed in Alberta, another group concerned with education, the Alberta Education Association (which consisted of all those interested in education: teachers, trustees, Department of Education bureaucrats, etc.), held regular conventions. At its 1917 convention some teacher-activists were able to have resolutions passed which effectively created the ATA (then called the Alberta Teachers' Alliance) as a separate organization. The main purpose of this organization was to improve working conditions for teachers, especially in obtaining higher salaries and job security. By mid-1918 it had already hired a lawyer to help its members in disputes with school boards. Also among its early actions, in the 1920s, was the hiring of a full-time executive secretary, John Barnett, and the starting up of its own publication, The ATA Magazine, under the editorship of then ATA president Hubert Newland. Much of the focus of the organization in the early years was in enlisting as many teachers as possible, hoping eventually to represent 100 percent of Alberta's teachers (Chalmers 1968, 16-17, 23-25, 29).

Not long after the ATA was created, a new Minister of Education was appointed in Alberta's Liberal government, G.P. Smith. In retrospect, it seems that there was conflict between Smith and the teachers' union from the outset. One of the most serious issues between the two was the interference of Smith's department in contract negotiations between teachers and school boards in which the teachers were receiving good terms. The ATA responded with inflammatory rhetoric in its magazine. "The result was open warfare between the A.T.A. (as represented by Barnett and Newland) and the Minister" (Walker 1969, 58). When Smith publicly referred to the ATA's leaders as a "handful of radicals" who were "knowingly misleading" the teachers, the ATA responded by passing a resolution censuring him (Walker 1969, 58-59).

Smith tried to rally teachers against the ATA by directly appealing to them at teachers' conventions. That being unsuccessful, he worked to revive the trustees' association which had become defunct during the First World War. In this he was more successful, and over 1300 delegates attended the 1921 trustees' convention. Although the stated purpose of the meeting was to discuss collective bargaining, Walker believes its "implicit purpose" was the "eradication" of the ATA (1969, 59-60).

Naturally, the ATA was unhappy with the existing Liberal government and was interested in achieving a government more favourable for its purposes. Therefore it should not be a surprise that there was early contact between the ATA and the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA).

> At least as early as January 1920 the Alliance executive in its capacity as the law committee had met the UFA board of directors in an effort to gain some commitments from them with respect to such things as salary schedules, continuous contracts, and the 200-day school year. The two bodies reached general if not complete agreement to the extent that the ATA virtually endorsed the new political movement (Chalmers 1968, 60).

The ATA's executive secretary, John Barnett, spent two days towards the end of the 1921 election campaign in the Camrose headquarters of the UFA to help oust education minister Smith (Chalmers 1968, 60).

In the early aftermath of the election, the UFA government asked the ATA to participate in the province's curriculum committees, a task the Alliance had been anxious to do. The ATA was also pleased by the fact that the UFA education minister, Perren Baker, strongly supported the concept of larger units for school administration, known as "school divisions." Teachers believed these larger units would be more stable financially, enabling them to pay teachers better, and would also provide more stable employment. Unfortunately for both Baker and the Alliance, the idea did not have the support of the UFA caucus and was therefore not implemented (Chalmers 1968, 95-97).

Aside from the aforementioned areas of agreement, the relationship between the ATA and the UFA government was surprisingly bad. The government was much more interested in supporting rural school trustees than the teachers. The rural school trustees represented the same voters who put the UFA in power. "So the UFA government soon adopted the protective colour of its main supporters; it rapidly became as indifferent to educational progress as its predecessor, and as hostile, or almost so, to the Alberta Teachers' Alliance" (Chalmers 1968, 45).

Another reason suggested as to why the UFA did not get along better with the ATA has to do with the deputy minister of education. For most of his period as education minister (1921-1935), Perren Baker had the same deputy minister as G.P. Smith had had, J.T. Ross. Ross apparently supported Smith's opposition to the Alliance, and strongly influenced Baker in this same direction. Ross and the ATA did not get along. "The animosity between the Deputy Minister and the Alliance continued until Ross's retirement [in 1934]" (Walker 1969, 64).

One of the chief goals of the ATA was to have teaching recognized by the government as a profession and to have itself declared the professional organization to which all teachers must belong. No progress was made on this issue until 1934. Towards the end of that year the ATA held a plebiscite among teachers to determine whether there was widespread support (as the ATA leaders believed) among them for the ATA to be declared an organization to which all teachers must belong. Of the ballots cast, 98 per cent were in favour of the ATA. Shortly thereafter Perren Baker said that he would introduce a bill to have the ATA declared a professional association for teachers, equivalent to the professional organizations for doctors, dentists, and lawyers. However, this proposal brought forth so much opposition from rural trustees, that the legislation was introduced as a private member's bill, to allow for a free vote (Chalmers 1968, 126).

The Teaching Profession Act was introduced into the Legislature in April, 1935 by a government MLA who had been a teacher. The bill provided for compulsory membership in the ATA. When the bill was sent to committee after first reading, another UFA MLA introduced an amendment to omit the compulsory membership clause, and the bill was so amended. Nevertheless, although there was still plenty of opposition to the bill, it squeaked by in a free vote of 25 to 22. Thus the bill passed but without the provision most important to the ATA. "Nonetheless, de jure recognition had been given by this Bill to the Alberta Teachers' Alliance which, under the terms of the Bill, had its name changed to The Alberta Teachers' Association" (Odynak 1963, 131-132).

Within a few months of this episode, the Social Credit Party won the provincial election. Chalmers writes that while "[t]he election of the UFA government in 1921 had meant little to the ATA; the advent of the Social Crediters fourteen years later was to be of the most profound significance to the newly renamed Association" (1968, 128). Shortly after the election the ATA prepared amendments to the Teaching Profession Act that would provide for compulsory membership and the power for the ATA to be able to discipline its members. These amendments were presented to the new government before the opening of the Legislature, and the government willingly adopted them. Thus by early April, 1936, the ATA had achieved some of its most desired goals (Odynak 1963, 137-138).

> This government's amendments of 1936 to The Teaching Profession Act are, without doubt, the most important legislation ever passed in Alberta as far as the teaching profession is concerned. These amendments, which granted compulsory membership of all practicing teachers in the Alberta Teachers' Association and gave the organization the power to discipline its members, are, by and large, responsible for the unquestionable prestige and power which the Association holds today (Walker 1969, 72-73).

Aside from this, the Social Credit government brought in quite a few other measures that were supported by the ATA. In fact, it has been said that

> the "golden years" for the association, in terms of improved social and economic status, came in the 1935-41 period. During these years the ATA included among

> its welfare accomplishments legislative sanction of the following: (1) Continuous contracts, with severance only upon the mutual agreement of both parties, and the right of the teachers to appeal against dismissal to a neutral board of reference. (2) Abolition of the individual form of contract, and teacher acceptance by letter assuring the positioning of the teacher on a group salary schedule. (3) The right to bargain collectively with school boards for salaries and for living and working conditions, as well as the right, in extreme conditions, to strike. (4) The legal definition of a salary schedule, making provisions for a minimum salary and annual increments for teaching experience. (5) Increases in the statutory minimum teacher's salary for Alberta. (6) A joint teacher-school board contributory retirement plan (Kratzmann 1964, 290).

The ATA fared better with William Aberhart as minister of education than any minister before or since. Aberhart himself was a former teacher and school principal who held the education portfolio for his entire time as Premier, 1935-43. He was the man responsible for the Association's "golden years." It could only be, then, that with the death of Aberhart in 1943, the relationship between the ATA and the government would no longer be quite as cozy. That is not to say that the relationship became sour. Rather, things just weren't as good for the ATA as they had been. The worst period for the ATA under the Social Credit government was probably 1948 to 1952 when Ivan Casey was the minister of education. However, Casey was followed in that portfolio by Anders Aalborg, who held it from 1952 to 1965. Aalborg was a former vice-president of the ATA, and during his tenure "relationships between the teachers and the department were probably better than during any other period since the death of Aberhart" (Chalmers 1968, 224-225). Aalborg was succeeded by a junior high school teacher, R.H.McKinnon who ended up losing his seat in the 1967 election. "McKinnon's successor was the Hon. R.Reierson, first minister of education in over thirty years who was not a school teacher" (Chalmers 1968, 225-226).

Again, the ATA did very well under the Social Credit government. Summarizing the history of the ATA up to the late 1960s, Chalmers notes that "tension-creating confrontations between the Association and the government were increasingly rare" (1968, 232). The ATA had succeeded in achieving its basic goals, and had become very influential in many areas of education policy. Indeed, it had strong linkages with the government from which it clearly benefited. This was its happy position when the Social Credit government was replaced by the Progressive Conservatives in 1971, an event, as will be seen, that had a significant impact on the influence of the ATA.

THE CREATION OF LARGER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION UNITS

In its early decades Alberta was primarily a rural society but there were important educational advantages to living in an urban centre. The concentration of population in urban areas aided in the establishment of schools since many students and ratepayers lived in close proximity. Much of rural Alberta had difficulty establishing and maintaining schools due to the relatively sparse population. Ultimately, most areas were able to have schools, but usually only one-room schools that taught elementary-level subjects.

When an area was being settled and acquired a certain minimum number of school-age children, it could become a "school district" and build a school. The size of a district was four miles by four miles. However, these schools were frequently inadequate due to a lack of finances and supplies, especially for higher grade levels. Rural students did not have "equal opportunity" for education compared to urban children; that is, urban school boards had more resources and could provide a better education than most rural boards. However, one idea for overcoming this difference was to amalgamate districts to form larger administrative units that would then have greater resources.

> [B]y 1912, the popular panacea for the ills of the "four-by-four" school district was the consolidated district, a union of two or more individual districts, each preserving its own identity but forming an organic union to operate a single school for all children in the whole area. In 1913 the Alberta Legislature made statutory provision for the complete consolidation of school districts. Within a few months, the first consolidated district, comprising four rural districts and one village district, was formed at Warner. When the pre-war era closed, consolidation was being discussed in every school district and the most significant educational movement of the war and post-war movement was well launched (Chalmers 1967, 40-41).

Thus many consolidated districts were formed each year until the early 1920s when the movement died out. They did not, however, meet expectations. What had been overlooked was the cost of transportation to the now more distant consolidated schools, and with the economic collapse after the First World War boom, less money was available for farmers to pay that cost (Chalmers 1967, 177). Thus, for the most part, education in rural areas continued to be deficient, both by the quality of materials available and number of programs provided.

Perren Baker, the UFA Minister of Education, took a keen interest in solving the problems of rural education. He believed that it was essential for rural students to have access to secondary education and to have more qualified teachers. The only solution, he believed, was to establish larger units for rural school administration. This would bring about a more equal opportunity for education by spreading out the costs over a larger geographic area; as it was, not only could urban areas provide superior education, but wealthy rural areas could afford better education for their children than the poorer districts (Wilson 1970, 79-81).

In 1929 Baker proposed a bill (which came to be called the "Baker Bill") that would create large school divisions and equalize educational taxation throughout the province. However, there was a considerable amount of opposition to the bill from rural school trustees so he withdrew it. The following year he reintroduced the bill with some important changes, including the elimination of the province-wide taxation scheme in favour of taxes being raised at the division level, with poorer districts receiving subsidies from the provincial government. However, once again the bill faced stiff opposition. Opponents saw the proposal as bringing about a centralization of education, i.e., removing control from the local district level. Ultimately the UFA caucus refused to support the bill and it was once again withdrawn (Wilson 1970, 81, 84-92).

Where Baker failed William Aberhart succeeded. Aberhart became Minister of Education in 1935 with the victory of his Social Credit party. He was convinced of the need for large rural education administrative units for the same reason as his predecessor. Although the concept still encountered strong opposition, especially from rural school trustees (many of whom would lose their positions due to the change), Aberhart quickly pushed through an amendment to the School Act in 1936 giving him power to establish large units of school administration. As Hanson puts it, "[t]he continued onslaught of depression made enlarged units more appealing and the election of a new government with a large majority led to action" (1956, 47).

> The larger units or divisions as they were called were to be administered by [a] divisional board composed of duly elected members from each of the older districts composing the large division. This new legislation provided for the appointment by the Minister of a superintendent of schools for each large division, the consolidation of the liabilities and assets of the smaller school districts with each being duly recorded, as well as the equalization of the school tax across the whole large division (Oviatt 1971, 52-53).

Thus the large units were finally achieved.

In the first year eleven divisions were set up. In their first year of operation, it was confirmed that they were more efficient than the smaller districts in the following ways: Teachers were being paid on time (which didn't always occur in the districts), substantial school repairs were being carried out, per pupil costs of education were substantially reduced, and programs of health supervision and library service were undertaken (Oviatt 1971, 56-57). Thus the new units largely met the expectations of their proponents.

That being the case, Aberhart pushed ahead with the establishment of more divisions. Between September 1937 and September 1942, 39 more divisions were created. Thus with a total of 50 divisions, the reorganization was declared effectively complete. Although 97 rural districts had been left out of school divisions, the 50 divisions that did exist encompassed 3342 school districts (Oviatt 1971, 59-60).

There was yet to be one further development in rural school governance. In 1950 the County Act was passed, and at the beginning of the following year the counties of Grande Prairie and Vulcan came into existence. "These new administrative units combined municipal and educational functions formerly exercised by municipal districts and school divisions" (Chalmers 1967, 294). The establishment of large school administration units had led to conflict between the school boards and municipal authorities over money. On the one hand, "a number of school officials felt that municipal councilors were too preoccupied with improving roads and keeping mill rates down," while on the other hand, some councilors felt that school division officials "attempted to provide a standard of educational services beyond the community's ability to pay" (Hanson 1956, 63-64). As well, many school divisions overlapped a number of smaller municipal districts, and this further complicated the existing conflicts. It was therefore believed that by combining school and municipal responsibilities into a single level of government, these conflicts could be avoided (Chalmers 1967, 294-296).

Before the widespread move to counties, the provincial government had tried to smooth relations between municipal governments and school boards by providing

> that each unit -- school or municipal -- should send a representative to the meetings of the board or council of the other. Such a representative was given the right to participate in all discussions of the school board or municipal council which related to matters under the control of his own local government unit, but he was not allowed to vote (Hanson 1956, 64).

In 1948 a process was put in place whereby financial disputes between the two units could be appealed to a representative of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. However, these efforts were unsuccessful (Hanson 1956, 64). More drastic measures were required to solve this problem which meant the creation of more counties.

Thus in 1953 the provincial government established a Coterminous Boundary Commission "[t]o establish coterminous boundaries for school divisions and municipal districts in all that part of the province that presently enjoys local government" (Chalmers 1967, 296). The Commission completed its study in 1954. Local government in rural Alberta was thus reorganized in accordance with its findings and many more counties came into existence, 28 by 1965. As a result, the areas that became counties had their local educational affairs dealt with by county governments, while the remaining municipal districts still had educational affairs dealt with by the school boards of the local school divisions (Chalmers 1967, 296-298).

It is clear, then, that issues of educational governance have played an important role in education politics in Alberta since early in the province's history. Furthermore, there has been a continuous trend towards larger units of administration and greater equalization of finance throughout this period. This would culminate in the educational restructuring policies of Ralph Klein's government.

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION AND ITS CRITICS

In Alberta, the contemporary debate about education standards and the related issues of testing, teaching the "basics," etc., is rooted in changes that occurred during the mid-1930s. At that time, what is commonly called "progressive education" was adopted by the Department of Education and implemented throughout the province. Although this stirred little controversy at the time, considerable opposition began to arise as more people began to see the results of this new education methodology. The general debate between supporters and opponents of progressive education is active still.

For the first three decades of its history, Alberta relied on the "traditional" view of education as the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. By the late 1920s, however, prominent people within Alberta's education system were seriously interested in the new education theory that was increasingly prominent in the United States. In contrast to the traditional view of education, progressive education claimed to build upon recent discoveries in child psychology, and put a much greater emphasis on the child as learner, rather than simply having him or her memorize facts by rote. In other words, it was believed by proponents of this new methodology that education should be "child-centered," with an emphasis on what the child experiences, not what the child could memorize. As well, there was an emphasis on developing the "whole child" -- developing his or her personality and character -- not just an emphasis on academics.

In 1927 the Education Society of Edmonton was formed. Among its membership were many educators who were or would become major players in Alberta's education system. As such, it became extremely influential in the direction that the system would take. Patterson notes that, "This group became a vital part of the educational leadership of the province" (1968, 94). The founders of the Society were quite interested in progressive education, and much of its efforts centered on studying progressive education theory. This helped to spread the influence of progressive education among Alberta's education leaders, including Department of Education officials, ATA officials, and professors of education. As well, Alberta educators who pursued graduate study frequently attended American graduate schools where progressive education was the dominant theory. "Those who were prominent in the educational developments of the period [i.e., the 1930s] almost without exception received some formal training in American graduate schools" (Patterson 1968, 130). By the mid-1930s, then, Alberta's top education leaders were convinced of the need to implement progressive education in the province's education system.

It was still during the tenure of the UFA government that the first moves were made towards the implementation of the new education methodology. In 1934 a curriculum committee was formed to revise Alberta's curriculum along the lines of progressive education. The following year William Aberhart became Minister of Education. Under Aberhart the curriculum changes implementing progressive education in Alberta went ahead in the fall of 1936. Apparently, the fact that Aberhart was busy with various responsibilities was a boon for those in the Department of Education who were most enthusiastic about the new curriculum.

> Aberhart's acceptance of the Education portfolio along with that of Premier and Attorney General meant that G.E. McNally as Deputy Minister and H.C. Newland as

> Supervisor of Schools provided much of the leadership in this field, unencumbered by close ministerial supervision. Such latitude was suited particularly to the interests and liking of Newland, who used this as an opportunity to introduce the curriculum and methodological reform he and others had been preparing (Patterson 1980, 186).

One would expect that Aberhart, being a fundamentalist preacher, would not have been at all favourable to the new curriculum since it would conflict with his basic beliefs. However, the fact that it was implemented under his tenure as Minister of Education "suggests he did not study carefully the curriculum revision endorsed by his government in 1936 or, like most teachers, ignored its philosophical implications" (Patterson 1980, 185).

In order to train teachers in the use of the new curriculum, summer schools for teachers were held and well attended. Many American experts in progressive education were brought to Alberta to instruct teachers during the summer schools. Prominent Americans in the progressive education movement were also brought in to speak at the teachers' conventions. This reached its climax in 1939 when nine members of the executive of the Progressive Education Association (PEA) came to the Alberta Teachers' Convention, a clear indication that the PEA endorsed Alberta's curriculum changes. In sum, Alberta was moving so strongly on the matter of progressive education as to attract the attention and active support of the world's most prominent proponents of progressive education (Patterson 1980, 187-188).

However, Alberta was yet to go further: "in 1940 Alberta produced another curriculum revision which marked the high-water point in the acceptance of progressive education in Alberta and for that matter in all of Canada" (Patterson 1980, 189). This revision extended and deepened the influence of progressive education philosophy throughout the curriculum. Although all the provinces were influenced to some degree by progressive education, Alberta was the most affected. Echoing his previous comment, Patterson refers to "The uniqueness of Alberta, as the leader and most enthusiastic Canadian convert to the new doctrine [i.e., progressive education]" (1980, 192).

Two important aspects of Alberta's adoption of progressive education should be borne in mind. First, the changes to the education system were initiated by a small group of professional educators who were strongly supportive of progressive education; the pressure to introduce progressive education did not come from politicians or the general public. As Patterson noted in his major study on this topic, "No evidence was uncovered which suggests a wide-spread awareness of or request for progressive education by either the general public or the larger body of teachers" (1968, 170). So it was introduced to the system by an elite of educational leaders.

Second, the influence of the American progressive education movement on Alberta was extremely strong. As mentioned, most of Alberta's leaders in progressive education had studied at US graduate schools; American progressive education experts had come to speak at summer schools and teacher conventions in Alberta; and leading American progressive supporters, such as those in the PEA, endorsed what Alberta was doing. "The impact of the American movement on that of Alberta is not to be denied. In a number of respects the latter movement was but an extension of the former" (Patterson 1968, 174).

The spread of progressive education throughout Canada ultimately led to a critical response from people who opposed it, who were often labelled education "traditionalists." The first and most comprehensive critique of progressive education in Canada was So Little for the Mind which came out in 1953. Written by Hilda Neatby, a professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan, the book struck a chord with the public and went through four extra printings and a second edition in the first six months after it was released (Kach and Mazurek 1992, 192; Ross 1992, 179).

Neatby was scathing in her indictment of progressive education. In her introduction she mentions three main criticisms:

> It is frankly anti-intellectual. There is no attempt to exercise, train and discipline the mind. This is old-fashioned language, now forbidden by the experts, but its

> meaning is still clear to the literate person. . . .
> Progressivism is anti-cultural. . . . [T]he result of progressivism has been effectively to cut off many if not most of our pupils from any real enjoyment or understanding of the inheritance of western civilization . . .
> Finally, progressive education is, or has been, amoral. . . . The general tendency of the progressive approach has been to weaken respect for law and authority as such, and to dull discrimination between right and wrong . . . (Neatby 1953, 15, 16, 17).

It is interesting how familiar these criticisms are to people living in the 1990s.

The book was very controversial and led to public debate about progressive education commonly called the "Neatby debate." That debate led in turn to a series of articles in Alberta newspapers dealing with progressive education by University of Alberta classics professor W.G. Hardy. Hardy wrote specifically about the impact of progressive education in Alberta, and the articles proved to be so popular that they were reprinted together as a booklet by the Calgary Herald (Ross 1992, 179). Hardy was willing to acknowledge that the new education methodology did have some positive aspects to it. However, he was still unhappy about what was going on: "The criticism of the Alberta system is that, in theory in particular, and in practice to a quite considerable degree, it has forgotten the fundamentals of true education. It has, instead, been led into some of the excesses of progressivism" (Hardy 1954, 44-45). His solution was quite simple, namely, "to let the pendulum swing back further in Alberta toward the traditional type of education" (Hardy 1954, 43).

Hardy's articles provoked a number of letters in reply. Although some of them were critical of his position, the vast majority supported what he had to say. Those letters reflected a general theme of a need to return to the "three Rs," rather than having a more sophisticated critique as represented by Hardy and Neatby. During this period the Director of Curriculum for Alberta, Mortimer Watts, gave a talk to a parent teacher association meeting defending Alberta's curriculum against Neatby's criticism. This generated further controversy and more "letters to the editor" of the Edmonton Journal criticizing progressive education. Due to the intense interest in this controversy, the Journal published another series of articles on this issue. These articles did not argue for one side or the other, yet still provoked a number of letters. "Once again, however, it was notable that readers' letters concerned themselves most of all with the desirability of discipline and traditional subjects in the classroom" (Ross 1992, 185).

What this section should make clear is that issues regarding educational standards and curriculum have long roots in the debate over education in Alberta. Books, articles, and letters are still written about these issues, but many of the basic arguments have been around for decades. In the contemporary debate there is often an emphasis on higher standards and the need to be able to measure results through standardized testing. These are particularly supported by education traditionalists and have been very influential in the education policy initiatives of the Progressive Conservative government.

THE CAMERON COMMISSION

In December, 1957, the Alberta government created the Royal Commission on Education headed by Senator Donald Cameron, the Director of the Banff School of Fine Arts. The Commission took almost two years to complete its study, and presented its report in November, 1959. This was a major event in Alberta's education history, one of only two royal commissions ever conducted on education in the province. There were actually two reports, a majority and minority report, reflecting some of the conflict over the direction that education should take. Most of the recommendations of the majority report were adopted by the government, but it is not clear if this was due to the influence of the Commission, or simply the result of the recommendations being compatible with what the government was already planning to do.

It is generally agreed that there were a number of factors that contributed to the government's decision to set up this Commission. One factor has already received some attention, namely, the debate about progressive education. This was a significant educational debate in Alberta in the 1950s, and critics of progressive education included not only academics such as Neatby and Hardy, but also businessmen and the Alberta Catholic Education Association (Kach and Mazurek 1992, 191-194). Another factor was a reflection of American concerns about the US education system after the Soviets achieved some significant advances in space technology in 1957. Many Americans felt that the Soviets were getting ahead technologically because the US education system was failing to provide the level of education necessary to develop scientists and technicians. This concern was also noticeable in Alberta (Daloise 1970, 21-23).

It is also important to note that during the 1950s there were some significant economic and social changes that had an impact on Alberta's education system. As a result of the discovery of large oil deposits in the late 1940s, the petroleum industry began to develop rapidly. The basis of Alberta's economy began to shift from agriculture to petroleum related activities, and large numbers of people moved into the province, especially its urban areas (Daloise 1970, 32). Not only were the demographics of education changing quickly, however, but also the focus of education had to be changed. "A changing economic base required a changing educational preparation" (Daloise 1970, 30). Thus economic and social changes also served to draw attention to Alberta's education system.

In spite of the above mentioned factors, Foster notes that "If there was any precipitating factor more than another that prompted reform action, it was the critical shortage of teachers" (1975, 90). Throughout most of its history, Alberta had experienced a shortage of teachers. This shortage became especially acute in the 1950s due to the rapid increase in the school-age population. In order to meet the need for teachers, the government decided to lower qualifications in order to gain them. The ATA was especially opposed to this move since it had always been supportive of higher standards for teachers. In 1956 the ATA called for a public inquiry into education. Also in that year the Alberta Home and School Association adopted a resolution calling for a royal commission on education. By September 1957 the Cabinet had decided that it would indeed set up a royal commission on education (Foster 1975, 92).

The Commission consisted of six people chosen to represent different sectors of Alberta, including the academic community, the business community, parents, rural areas, and Roman Catholic interests. It was assigned some support staff to help oversee the research conducted and the evaluation of briefs presented to it (Kozakewich 1980, 44-46). The Commission had three main purposes: "to survey the entire school system of the province, to provide a forum for public opinion on education and to complete as accurately and objectively as possible, the phases of information-gathering and evaluation of recommendations about the system" (Foster 1975, 127). The Commission had wide scope, with the first item in its Terms of Reference reading, "The Commissioners shall study and consider the aims and objectives essential to maintain a proper and adequate educational program for pupils of the elementary and secondary schools of the Province" (Cameron et al 1959, 4). Foster also notes that "The Commission's status and task enabled it to play, for a limited time, a strategic role in potential policy-making for education" (1975, 112).

The Commssion scheduled hearings throughout the province and called for briefs to be presented by interested groups and individuals. "For 52 days during a period of seven months (April to November, 1958), the Commissioners listened to 600 persons present 189 briefs and propose 5,000 recommendations" (Cameron et al 1959, 7). About half of the briefs were from groups or individuals associated with the education system (Foster 1975, 117-118).

Kozakewich identifies six "key" interest groups as being especially influential on the Commission: the ATA, the Alberta School Trustees' Association (ASTA), the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations, the Farmers' Union of Alberta (FUA), the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education, and the Department of Education (1980, 46). Interestingly, five of the six were directly interested in education.

> As for interaction among interest groups, it is evident that the relationship among the major interest groups in education was a close one. Witness, for example, that the teaching profession and the academics in teacher education were in many cases social as well as professional associates, a situation conducive to the interchange and development of common policy, objectives and strategies (Kozakewich 1980, 232-233).

In fact, the brief presented by the ATA was basically put together by the Faculty of Education. That Faculty also presented a brief on its own behalf (Kozakewich 1980, 228).

Not only were there linkages between the interest groups, there were also linkages between those groups and the Commission itself. This had a noticeable effect on the Commission's report.

> The concurrence of the recommendations of the majority report with the views of the major professional groups was linked with the dominance of the professional educator in the structure and function of the Commission as well as the nature of the networks (or structural and functional relationships) formed between the Commission and those groups (Foster 1975, 132).

Daloise also points out that professional educators "furthered their relative impact on the school system" as a result of "the considerable influence they exerted on the Commission and its conclusions" (1970, 54).

Since there was such a close connection between the major education interest groups and the Commission, it is not surprising that the main conflict that the Commission had to deal with came from another quarter. John Cormack had been appointed to the Commission to represent the interests of Roman Catholics. A strong critic of progressive education, Cormack increasingly felt himself at odds with the direction of the Commission's analysis. When it became apparent that his views could not be accomodated in the Commission's report, he decided to write a "minority report," which did indeed get published along side the "majority report." Cormack argued that progressivism was detrimental and should be replaced by a more traditional form of education which he termed "essentialism." "The tenor of the minority report was, therefore, a rebuttal of most of the findings and recommendations of the majority report with the substitution of one dominant recommendation, the replacing of progressivism with essentialism in theory and in practice" (Foster 1975, 131).

Cormack also saw the conflict between educational philosophies reflected in a conflict between professional educators, who he termed the "Professional Group," and those who weren't professional educators, who he termed the "Lay Group." "The lay groups tended to be essentialist even as the professional groups appeared to be advocating much that is compatible only with a progressivist philosophy of education" (Cormack 1959, 361). In his view, there was a "great divergence of opinion between the professional and the lay groups" (1959, 361). Cormack not only argued for essentialist education philosophy, but he also promoted strengthening parental rights in education. In its two page response to the minority report, the majority wrote that the Commission "emphatically rejects the minority implication that progressivism has run rampant in Alberta." It also noted the difficulty of appreciating "just how parental rights would flourish under the educational domination of 'right-wing' members of the essentialist philosophy" (Cameron et al 1959, 288, 289). The dispute between Cormack and the other Commissioners was quite sharp and provided a focus for public controversy.

During the 1950s the press had generally been quite critical of Alberta's education system. The press also severely criticized the Commission's majority report when it was released. The Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal led the criticism, which became so severe that the ATA and ASTA together protested the criticism to the Southam newspaper headquarters in Montreal (Daloise 1970, 24-25). In one editorial, the Edmonton Journal said the Commission "failed to strike at the roots of the basic cause of the deterioration of education -- the 'progressivist' philosophy and methods." And it spoke of the need to be "rooting out the 'progressivist' influence" from Alberta's education system (1959, 4). The Edmonton Journal also carried a front page article by the by now well-known critic of progressive education, Hilda Neatby, criticizing the majority report (Neatby 1959, 1-2).

Besides the press, the Roman Catholic Church also expressed criticism of the majority report. The Catholic Bishops of Alberta had a Pastoral Letter read in all churches in March 1960 expressing disappointment that that report failed to take Catholic views into account (Foster 1975, 137-138).

In spite of the criticism of the report as a progressivist document, it contained many recommendations that were directly intended to improve students' academic performance. A number of recommendations "stressed the importance of developing appropriate diagnostic and achievement tests, emphasized the need to ensure student mastery of factual knowledge, and often requested extending the program of studies within a particular discipline" (Kach and Mazurek 1992, 207). Furthermore, student performance could also be increased through improving teachers' working conditions (for example, lowering the pupil-teacher ratio), and increasing the minimum qualifications for teachers (Kach and Mazurek 1992, 207).

After the release of the report, the Department of Education set up the Special Department Committee to consider each of the majority report's 280 recommendations, and to recommend action on each item to the Minister of Education and the Cabinet. In March 1961, after that committee had reported, the Minister presented to the Legislature his intentions with regard to the recommendations.

> By 1961 eighty-four percent of the recommendations were found in the categories in effect at the time of the Commission, implemented in whole or in part, to be implemented in whole or in part, or to be kept under review with intention of implementing in whole or in part. Of the recommendations, only nine percent had been rejected and the remainder were not classified (Foster 1975, 141).

One of the recommendations later adopted was the establishment of the Educational Planning Commission in 1969 (the Worth Commssion).

A very high percentage of the Commission's recommendations were enacted. Apparently, the reason for this was that "The recommendations reflected the views of the major groups responsible for decision-making and implementation of decisions in Alberta education" (Foster 1975, 145). Educational writers seem agreed that the report has been important to Alberta's education system. However, "Though the report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta has had a considerable influence on education in the province, it is difficult to empirically assess this impact" (Kach and Mazurek 1992, 211). Thus it cannot be clearly stated that the Commission had certain specific affects.

In summary, after close to a decade of controversy about various aspects of the education system, the Alberta government set up a royal commission to investigate the system and offer recommendations for its improvement. The Commission was dominated by professional educators (the "education establishment"), and thus its report was endorsed by and implemented by that establishment. The minority report, reflecting a much more conservative view of education, was ignored.

TRANSITION TO THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PERIOD

The material considered to this point describes the most important aspects of Alberta's education history to the 1960s. One can see how the present system developed in its earlier years. The ATA became an important part of the education establishment after the election of the Social Credit government, and remained a very significant player as long as that party was in power. Progressive education also took root early in the Social Credit era and became the favoured educational method of the education establishment. It did receive considerable criticism, especially during the 1950s, but its supremacy in the system was confirmed by the Cameron Commission majority report; the minority report criticizing progressive education was ignored. In sum, it was during the Social Credit period that the modern educational 'establishment' took shape and had a virtual free reign in the development of education policy.

Just before the PCs were elected a new School Act was developed in 1970. This Act would be in place for the first seventeen years of the PC period, and so deserves special attention. As well, Alberta's second Royal Commission on education was appointed by the Social Credit government in 1969 but didn't report until 1972, after the new government had been elected. The completion of the report was a major event in Alberta's education policy history, and received considerable attention. Its influence on the PC government is ambiguous, but it provides the background to many of the education policy debates of the 1970s.

THE SCHOOL ACT, 1970

Although the School Act is amended relatively frequently in Alberta, only occasionally is it completely rewritten. Alberta's first school legislation was the School Ordinance of 1901. The provisions of that Ordinance were maintained in the Alberta Act of 1905, and it remained the central piece of educational legislation until a completely rewritten School Act was adopted in 1931. That Act, in turn, was replaced by a completely new one in 1952, and the 1952 Act was replaced in 1970. The next, and last, revised School Act was adopted in 1988. Here, however, we will consider the rewriting of the Act in 1970.

By the middle of 1968 there were discussions among people in the upper echelons of the Department of Education about the need to revise the School Act. Both the ATA and the ASTA had indicated to the government their desire to have the Act revised, and at its November 1968 convention the ASTA adopted a resolution calling for the Act to be entirely rewritten. That Association believed that the existing Act had become simply a "patchwork" due to the number of amendments it had received (Stringham 1974, 80-84). The new Deputy Minister of Education, Tim Byrne, was himself personally committed to having the Act changed. In his view,

> the *School Act* was dripping with anachronisms; it was a document that no one could really defend. . . . Much of its content was getting in the way of the operation of schools because of the involved nature of the document. A revision of the Act was necessary to make the law more consistent with what appeared to be current views (McIntosh and Bryce 1977, 58).

In January, 1969, the government set up the Committee for Rewriting the School Act the purpose of which was obvious from its title. It was chaired by Bryant Stringham of the Department of Education, and also included one representative of the University of Alberta, two from the ATA and two from the ASTA. Later in the month a representative of the Alberta Catholic Trustees' Association (ACTA) was invited to be a member of the Committee, and then in April a representative from the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations (AFHSA) was also invited. At the Committee's first meeting in February, it was decided that a revision of the Act would not be sufficient, and that a complete rewrite was in order, as had been advocated by the ASTA. A draft of the new legislation was expected to be ready for the Legislature in the spring of 1970 (Stringham 1974, 88-90, 92-93).

By March concerns were arising about the rewriting of the Act. Some school boards requested that the new legislation be postponed until 1971 in order to ensure that there would be time for the boards to analyze and react to it. The Minister of Education, Robert Clark, responded by publicizing the activities of the Committee to encourage more public participation, especially through the submission of proposals to the Committee. Two bulletins were distributed throughout the province in the spring and summer to report on the progress of the Committee and encourage a continual flow of briefs. Over 100 briefs were ultimately submitted. However, many school boards still felt that the process was being rushed (Stringham 1974, 92-95).

Another criticism that appeared was that the government did not have a clear educational philosophy to guide the rewriting of the School Act. The Minister responded by declaring that the Act simply provides a framework for the school system and that educational philosophy was not to be legislated by the Act. Then in May 1969 the Commission on Educational Planning headed by Dr. Walter Worth was set up (Stringham 1974, 95-96).

> The terms of reference for the Commission included responsibility to enquire into current social and economic trends and to examine the needs that individuals would likely have during the next two decades. Thus the demand that the Government consider the basic philosophy underlying education in the province was met and attention seemed to be focused away from what had earlier been a concern with respect to the School Act (Stringham 1974, 96).

There was a division of labour: the Committee was dealing with the framework of the school system, and the new Commission was dealing with educational philosophy.

The Committee's work was completed in August and its proposals were sent to the Attorney General for legal drafting. Responses to the proposals were encouraged, and the Minister held two conferences in the fall to encourage more discussion. A convention of the ASTA and a Seminar on the School Act sponsored by the AFHSA also contributed to discussion of the proposals (Stringham 1974, 97-99).

A legal draft of the proposed legislation was released in December, 1969. The ATA quickly condemned it due to certain provisions dealing with teachers' contracts, teachers' duties, regional bargaining, and limitations on school board spending. It held an emergency meeting which called on the government to halt implementation of the new Act. However, first reading went ahead in February, 1970, and at the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, Agriculture and Education where the legislation was being reviewed, the ATA presented the only major opposition to it. The Bill passed in April 1970 (Stringham 1974, 100-103).

By the time the Bill was passed, enough changes had been made to it to satisfy many of the concerns of the ATA.

> To the Alberta Teachers' Association passage of the Act represented a particularly fruitful lobbying effort in the final month of the rewriting activity. Analysis of the amendments made to Bill 35 between the time of the public hearings on the Act in early March and April 15 when third and final reading was given indicates that six

> significant concessions to the teachers' point of view were accomodated (Stringham 1974, 137).

To a large degree, then, the ATA was placated. Stringham also notes that "the fact that the Alberta Teachers' Association was able to generate sufficient pressure on government to accomplish certain of its demands would seem to indicate that the A.T.A. is a group which had power" (Stringham 1974, 155-156).

One of the most important goals to be aimed at in rewriting the Act was a form of decentralization: "Preservation of local autonomy and control whenever possible is to be an underlying principle in the revised act" (Stringham 1974, 87). Some school systems were quite large and their professional staff was able to deal with a large range of activities. It was believed by some that these school systems should be granted more authority to deal with their own operations. Although the new Act restricted the ability of boards to levy for more money, overall there was an increase in local autonomy. This was an important feature of the new Act (Stringham 1974, 107, 158, 166).

One minor point (but one that is interesting in light of the 1988 Act) was the issue of parental rights. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes a section indicating that parents have a "prior right" to determine the kind of education their children receive. This point was discussed by the Committee, but it was not agreed that this could be given legislative sanction. Therefore parental rights were not listed as a basic principle in the rewriting of the Act, an omission objected to by the ACSTA (Stringham 1974, 117-118). This would again be an issue when the PC government rewrote the School Act in the 1980s, but would be handled quite differently. A strong statement recognizing parental rights was included in the preamble of the 1988 Act (School Act 1988, 9).

The School Act of 1970 was not at all revolutionary or notable for any kinds of significant innovations; at its heart, it only represented a consolidation of the status quo.

> The fact that there was little questioning of the Act itself in the Legislature and that there was virtually no opposition to the proposals that were put forward by members

of the Opposition illustrates that the Bill contained proposals which were politically safe. The Act did tend to cause little conflict, to maintain stability and to preserve the existing system under which education was operating (Stringham 1974, 160).

THE WORTH COMMISSION

In 1969 the Alberta government established the Commission on Educational Planning. This was a royal commission, but had only one commissioner, Dr. Walter Worth, a University of Alberta education professor. The Commission took three years to prepare its report, which was released in 1972. In the meantime, the government that had established the Commission was replaced, and a new party was in power. Although the new government cautiously endorsed the Commission's report, the report did not have an impact comparable to that of the Cameron Commission. Indeed, the government would later back-track on the implementation of one of the most important recommendations (the abolition of departmental exams), and many other recommendations were simply ignored.

In its 1959 report, the Cameron Commission had recommended that an "Educational Planning Commission" be set up by the government to help plan the development of Alberta's educational system (Recommendation 280). Wilcer, in his study of the implementation of certain Cameron Commission recommendations, writes "Order-in - Council 1126/69 dated June 24, 1969, established the Commission on Educational Planning; therefore, the intent of Recommendation 280 is implemented in full after a ten-year delay" (1970, 103). He gives three reasons for the ten-year delay: 1) the Department of Education resisted this recommendation because it did not believe that such a planning commission was necessary; 2) the idea lacked support from various educational organizations; and, 3) it also lacked public support (1970, 104). Nevertheless, it was only 'unforeseen changes' during the 1960s which made the need for such a commission rather apparent. Yet for Wilcer, this new commission was primarily the implementation of a Cameron Commission recommendation (1970, 104-105).

The unforeseen changes that Wilcer refers to likely relate to the educational issues that came to the fore by the mid to late 1960s. First, there was concern about curriculum and instruction. For some educational professionals, there was still too much emphasis on the traditional method of making students master subject material. They wanted more focus on the learner as an individual. As well, admission policy to post-secondary education was seen to be too restrictive, and research in post-secondary institutions was seen to have taken on too great a priority at the expense of teaching. Secondly, the cost of education at all levels had been rising dramatically during the 1960s, and this became a major concern. Thirdly, there was concern about the organization and structure of post-secondary education because the government seemed to be responding to growth in this area in an ad hoc fashion. Finally, some of the larger school divisions had become quite sophisticated and were demanding a greater degree of responsibility. In other words, they wanted more functions transferred to them from the Department of Education. This amounted to a demand for decentralization. These issues likely contributed to an atmosphere that was more open to the idea of creating another commission on education (Keoyote 1973, 88-91).

In spite of the recommendations of the Cameron Commission and the educational issues that had become prominent during the 1960s, one other factor seems to have played the most crucial role in the creation of the new commission. "The initiative for establishing a commission on educational planning came from a group of young men in the Social Credit Party during a province-wide leadership campaign in 1969" (Keoyote 1973, 208-209). In 1969 Ernest Manning had resigned as Premier and leader of the provincial Social Credit Party. Therefore a new leader had to be chosen. One of the candidates, Harry Strom, was supported by a group of young men (known as the "young Turks") who had been impressed by the Hall-Dennis study on education in Ontario that had been released in 1968. They wanted something similar done in Alberta. Strom did indeed win the leadership, and he appointed Robert Clark as Minister of Education. Clark had been close to the young men who supported Strom and, on assuming his new portfolio, began to discuss the idea of a study of education with his top department officials. As a result it was agreed that a commission on educational planning be set up, although its task would be different from that of the Hall-Dennis Commission (Keoyote 1973, 94-96).

In my interview with Robert Clark, however, he did not remember it this way. He said that the idea for the Commission came from Tim Byrne, the Deputy Minister of Education. Byrne had also liked the Hall-Dennis report, and it was his idea to have a similar study done in Alberta. Clark agreed to this. But Clark's executive assistant, John Barr, in his book on the Social Credit government, attributes the Commission to the "young Turks," in the way discussed above. Barr says that one of the specific policy proposals Strom made during his leadership campaign was "a full-scale study of how best to adapt the Alberta educational system at all levels to the social and economic needs of the people until the year 2000" (1974, 180). This proposal had come from the "young Turks" (1974, 190).

The Order-in-Council creating the Commission on Educational Planning (CEP) was released on June 24, 1969. This Commission was to have only one Commissioner, Walter Worth, who selected eight other people who, together with him, formed a "Commission Board." As well, three "task forces" on specific areas were formed, and other support and research staff were hired (Keoyote 1973, 103-104).

The Commission was to concern "itself with all forms and all levels of education; the scope included education from kindergarten to university, formal as well as informal, and private as well as public" (Keoyote 1973, 104).

> The mandate involved the period between 1970 and 1990 and included the following tasks: (1) To project the nature of Alberta society and the needs of the

> individual during this period; (2) To recommend on adaptations of the total educational system to meet the nature of the Alberta society and the needs of the individual during this period; (3) To propose bases for priority establishments in the development of educational policies, including educational finance, during the first half of this period; (4) To propose permanent structures and processes for administration, coordination, and long-range planning in Education. Although the Commission was to make recommendations applicable to the period 1970 to 1990, it took the liberty of extending the period to 2005 (Keoyote 1973, 106).

There were three phases to the work of the Commission. The first phase was primarily organizational, involving the distribution of responsibilities and the setting of target dates. The second stage was information gathering, i.e., conducting research and holding public hearings for people and organizations to express their views. "The three main sources of information were the research studies, the task force interim proposals and the public opinions both in writing and in words" (Keoyote 1973, 137-138). And the third and final stage was the writing of the Commission's report entitled A Choice of Futures (Keoyote 1973, 138).

Public consultation was rather extensive. Three hundred and thirty submissions were received from groups and individuals; 36 public hearings involving more than 5000 people were held; eleven conferences, three seminars, and a "Congress on the Future" were held, as well as various other meetings and consultations (Keoyote 1973, 120-121).

Finally, on June 16, 1972, the Commission published its report. The report argues that Albertans must choose between two different alternatives for the future of their society: they can make decisions that will lead to a "second-phase industrial society" or a "person-centred society." Alberta was seen to be a first-phase industrial society, and if it continued in this trajectory, would automatically become a second-phase industrial society. In this kind of society economic and technological development are seen as being more important than individual needs and wants. As a result, pollution and traffic congestion, as well as other urban problems, would become worse, while tensions between the rich and poor would increase. More and more resources would be used to keep social control, thus leading to encroachments on privacy. In contrast, the person-centred society would view individual needs and rights as taking precedence over economic growth and technological development. The economic system would be subservient to helping individuals achieve self-fulfillment. "The over-arching goal is the cultivation and enrichment of all human beings" (Worth 1972, 28).

The values currently (1972) held by Albertans had led to the kind of society they enjoyed, but if left unchanged, would take them into a second-phase industrial society. Worth wanted them to realize that and thus to change their values before it was too late.

> A choice of futures involves the deliberate selection of a set of dominant values and beliefs that direct the activities of society and the lives of its members. Our first alternative, the second-phase industrial society, assumes that the dominant values of the years ahead will be more or less the same as they are now. Our second alternative involves a rapid and dramatic shift in values (Worth 1972, 30).

Worth argued that recent social changes had created pressures for a change in values, from the "traditional values" that underlay the move towards a second-phase industrial society to the "humanist values" that would lead to a person-centred society. To him, this pressure suggested "the existence of a force for change in the direction of the person-centred society" (1972, 33). He supported the person-centred alternative and argued that "traditional values are not serving us well" (1972, 33). In fact, he wrote that Alberta's social ills "can, in large part, be attributed to traditional values which emphasize economic goals and technological advance without regard for their costs and consequences to the individual, society and the environment" (1972, 33). New values and goals would be necessary to solve society's problems and create the person-centred society. "The vision of this new society can be realized. Whether or not it is realized depends upon the transformation of values" (Worth 1972, 34). Thus the report called for a wholesale change in the values that underlay Alberta's society.

Of course, there was much more to the report than a call for a change in values. It went on to discuss many aspects of Alberta's education system. A large number of recommendations were made, but the report had a "top-ten" list of proposals which it suggested receive immediate attention from the government. Among these ten were "provision of universal opportunity and selective experience in early education" (i.e., early childhood services), "abolition of Grade XII departmental examinations," and the "modification in certification requirements for teachers in early and basic education" (Worth 1972, 300). Also of note is the recommendation (not included among the "top ten") that legislation be amended to allow "school councils" to be established whereby students, parents, and teachers could have a say in the operation of their school. This is related to the recommendation that decision-making power be as decentralized as possible to allow people living in the local communities to be able to have a meaningful influence on their schools (Worth 1972, 124-127). Furthermore, it was recommended that rural school jurisdictions continue to amalgamate to create larger units which could provide higher quality schooling. As had been argued for many years, the report stated that "amalgamation would help to correct the disparities that exist between rural and urban schools in Alberta." The amalgamation would, of course, lead to a "reduction in the number of jurisdictions" (Worth 1972, 74).

After the release of the report, the Cabinet Committee on Education, consisting of the Minister of Education, Minister of Advanced Education, and the Minister of Manpower and Labour, undertook the task of soliciting reactions to the report's recommendations. The Committee held a publicity campaign to stimulate responses to the report. A total of 3270 responses were received by February 1973, including letters, briefs and questionnaires. Where appropriate, suggestions in these responses were sent to the relevant officials with a request to evaluate them. More importantly, the responses were considered as the Committee decided on what position the government should take on the recommendations of the report (Keoyote 1973, 157-160).

On March 30, 1973, the new Minister of Education, Lou Hyndman, announced in the Legislature the government's position on the report. Interestingly, the government did not accept Worth's admonition to choose between two kinds of society.

> [T]he government chooses neither the report's second phase industrial society, nor its people centered society. Because while the government has no particular model in mind, we do find that this model construction approach is probably too simplistic as a procedure for setting goals, bearing in mind the fact that we're in a democratic environment where you can only really set forth a particular society if you are in an authoritarian organization where you can set goals and then reach them by controlling all the economy. If we're in a democratic situation where there is local autonomy, we find this goal setting somewhat simplistic, and certainly wouldn't accept either of the two models. Our position would be somewhere between these two alternatives (Alberta Hansard 1973, 1535).

Hyndman went on to say that the government's response to the 400 specific recommendations would be given in the future. At that point, he only wanted to comment on six of the "top ten" recommendations. With regards to the three noted above, Hyndman said that an early childhood services (ECS) plan had been implemented, the departmental exams had been abolished, and there had been some modification in the certification requirements for teachers (Alberta Hansard 1973, 1535).

The response of the ATA and ASTA to those three recommendations should also be noted. The ATA endorsed the proposal for ECS, but added that "early education programs should be under the direction of qualified teachers and operated in schools" (ATA Magazine 1972, 23). It also endorsed the abolition of the grade 12 exams. With regard to teacher certification, Worth had recommended that teaching certificates be issued for 10 year renewable terms rather than being permanent. The ATA strongly opposed that proposal, and supported the continued use of permanent certificates. It also desired to take over the responsibility for certification itself: "The Association is ready, willing and able to take over the responsibility for certification and decertification of its members" (ATA Magazine 1972, 24). Keoyote notes the following about the teachers' union and the Worth report: "It may well be that the ATA was one of the most influential groups with respect to the work of the CEP." One reason for this "was the involvement of the Executive Secretary [of the ATA] in the work of the CEP" (1973, 203).

As for the ASTA, it agreed with the idea of ECS. It was willing to support the abolition of departmental exams as long as another form of subject exam would be administered to asses the students, and as long as school boards would have the right to administer school leaving exams. As for teacher certification, the ASTA wanted the Legislature to remain in control, and wanted certificates to be issued for 5 year terms. The president of the ASTA, Harold Gunderson, was himself unfavourable to the report. He gave an address to trustees that was very critical of it. He contrasted Worth's support for "the new social order of a person-centred society" with that of Albertans who "do not want to see their educational system structured to accelerate the demise of respected institutions and values" (Gunderson 1972, 5).

Some action was taken by the government to enact recommendations of the report. Aside from what has already been mentioned, The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation (ACCESS) Act was passed, the Universities Commission and the Colleges Commission were abolished, and steps were taken to reorganize the Department of Advanced Education. These actions accorded with recommendations in the report (Campbell 1980, 2). Nevertheless, Campbell's study of the implementation of some of the report's recommendations led to the conclusion that the report actually had little impact on Alberta's education policy.

> [T]he recommendations of the Worth Report and the trends in policy and activities of Alberta Education were compared. There are few similarities. Although some proposals have been developed in support of the Worth Report recommendations, they have been consistently rejected by the Government. It appears that trends developed through activities and policies of Alberta Education were established prior to the Worth report (1980, 69-70).

Campbell also concluded that "The change in government [from Social Credit to Progressive Conservative] may have had more impact in basic education developments with respect to policy than did the recommendations of the Worth Report" (1980, 75).

One area where the report did have an impact was post-secondary education. Shortly after the PCs were elected a Department of Advanced Education was created. Apparently, the Worth Report was going to recommend such an action but was beaten to the punch by the new government. The report also recommended the transferring of post-secondary educational programs from other departments to Advanced Education so that all education in the province would be divided between that department and the Department of Education (Nussbaumer 1977, 107, 129, 134).

After the report was issued, Walter Worth was appointed Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. This "seemed to imply that the government was accepting his Report" (Nussbaumer 1977, 131). "Apparently it was assumed that W. H. Worth as Deputy Minister would influence the acceptance and implementation of recommendations" (Nussbaumer 1977, 199). Worth was in charge of reorganizing the department and reorganization did take place from 1973 to 1976 although "it was not exactly as the Worth report had recommended" (Nussbaumer 1977, 185). In 1976 Worth was mysteriously replaced as Deputy Minister. Nussbaumer writes that this was a "significant" change "about which very little information could be found, or was volunteered" (1977, 180).

While the Cameron Commission was well received by the government of the day, and most of its recommendations implemented to one degree or another, the reception of the Worth Commission was more ambiguous. Certainly some recommendations were initially implemented, and the Commissioner given an important position, but most of the recommendations seem to have been ignored. It does seem significant that the Worth Commission had been appointed by the Social Credit government (the idea having originated with young supporters of Harry Strom), which had been replaced by the time that the Commission reported. The Progressive Conservative government was skeptical of at least some aspects of the report, as witnessed by Hyndman's rejection of the choice between the two types of societies the report offered. At this early stage of the PC government, though, it did not appear to have a strong sense of direction for education policy. However, a direction would emerge after its re-election in 1975.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has covered the essential historical background of Alberta's education system up to the early 1970s. Four themes have been emphasized. The struggle over the shape of Alberta's education system in 1905 involved issues of school choice, i.e., whether Roman Catholics would have separate schools for their children to attend. For the most part, separate schools represented the only serious alternative to the regular public schools until the 1970s. The emergence of the ATA as a key player in Alberta's education system, recognized as such in legislation, was noted, as was the Association's relatively harmonious relationship with the Social Credit government. The theme of local school jurisdictions being amalgamated to form larger units seems to have been present for much of the province's history, and would manifest itself again in the restructuring efforts of the Klein government in 1994. Concerns about educational standards and curriculum were evident in public controversy over progressive education by the 1950s, and reached a high point in John Cormack's minority report of the Cameron Commission. Discussions about the need to raise educational standards would again emerge by the mid-1970s, and were frequently identified with a desire to go "back to basics." The Cameron Commission, Worth Commission, and School Act of 1970, have important places in the history of Alberta's education system, with the latter two providing the contextual backdrop for the education policies of the Progressive Conservative government elected in 1971. To begin discussion of PC education policy without an understanding of this background would only result in confusion.

At this point the change in government from Social Credit to Progressive Conservative must be considered, with special emphasis on the implications for education policy. Within a few years of coming to power, the PC government was taking education in Alberta in quite a different direction in each of the four theme areas under consideration.

CHAPTER 3

THE ELECTION OF THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE NEW DIRECTION IN EDUCATION

Alberta's political history can easily be divided into four periods: the Liberal period 1905-1921; the UFA period 1921-1935; the Social Credit period 1935-1971; and, finally, the Progressive Conservative period 1971 to the present time. During Alberta's history, the electoral defeat of a government has in each case represented a long-term and significant change. Parties do not alternate in and out of power as they do in the other provinces. The victory of the PCs in the 1971 provincial election was at least as significant as any of the other changes in government Alberta has experienced, in spite of the fact that their basic political philosophy differed little from the people they replaced. While Peter Lougheed was Premier, the province underwent widespread change, although much of that change can undoubtedly be attributed to the oil boom of the 1970s rather than specific political changes. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to underestimate Lougheed's importance in this period.

THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ELECTION VICTORY

Naturally, the question arises as to why such a significant political change would occur in 1971. Two main explanations have been offered. The first, and probably widest held, is that the PC victory was the result of social changes that had occurred in Alberta largely as a result of economic development. The second focuses more on the issues of the time, especially the dynamic leadership of Peter Lougheed and the dearth of a leadership cadre in the Social Credit Party at the moment of the resignation of Ernest Manning.

The Political Economy View

A number of observers believe that the 1971 victory of the PCs was the result of a change in the social characteristics of Alberta's population. Alberta's economy was changing: it was becoming less agricultural and more reliant on the petroleum industry. This, as well as other important social trends such as urbanization, had significant political implications. The ultimate effect of these trends is best stated by Richards and Pratt:

> Alberta's large and growing urban middle classes, nurtured by twenty-five years of oil and gas development, acceded to political power in the provincial election of August 30, 1971. That election, which saw Peter Lougheed's revived Progressive Conservatives win forty-nine seats to Social Credit's twenty-five and the NDP's one, was one of critical realignment -- the political consolidation of major economic, demographic, and social changes which had occurred in Alberta in the generation of growth after Leduc. With the considerable advantage of hindsight, Lougheed's victory and the abrupt termination of the Social Credit dynasty represented an inevitable, albeit considerably delayed, response of the electoral system to rapid population growth, urbanization, and secularization -- trends underway during and after World War II, but greatly accelerated by the oil boom. The meaning of Lougheed's victory was this: the political centre of gravity within Alberta had shifted in favour of metropolitan interests. The city, represented by an alliance of business and professional elites and led by a descendant of one of Alberta's ruling families, now dominated the towns and farms. Power had passed into the outstretched hands of Alberta's new bourgeoisie (1979, 148-149).

According to this view, Social Credit was primarily a rural based party, receiving its strongest support from farmers, and heavily imbued with fundamentalist religious influences. With the relative decline of farming and the rural population, and the decline of religious sentiment, it seemed natural that Social Credit would also decline. Thus the PC victory was the political result of social change in the province.

Furthermore, Alberta's "new bourgeoisie" wanted changes made in Alberta's economy. The Social Credit government had been satisfied with allowing American oil companies to be the main beneficiaries of Alberta's petroleum resources, and had used the income it received from the oil to boost its expenditures on education and social services to levels higher than any of the other provinces (Finkel 1989, 142). Premier

Manning was so intent on ensuring a favourable environment for American capital that he was unwilling to undertake resource policies that would offend the US oil companies. However, under this system Alberta's oil would run out and the economy would inevitably decline. Therefore, as articulated by Lougheed, the new bourgeoisie wanted the government to undertake policies that would harness the income derived from Alberta's petroleum resources and use it to diversify Alberta's economy. This action by the provincial government to direct the diversification of the economy has been called "province building." According to Richards and Pratt, through the government-sponsored diversification of the economy, "Alberta's new bourgeoisie has begun to make arrangements for its own future in preparation for the inevitable day when the international oil industry leaves the province" (1979, 168).

From this political economy perspective, then, the election of the PC government in the early 1970s resulted from the increasing size and power of a "new bourgeoisie" that was intent on changing the focus of Alberta's economy. There was more than just a change of parties in power, there was also a change in elites and a change in visions for the province. To achieve its goals the new government would have to be much more active than its predecessor.

Palmer and Palmer have also used the social change perspective to explain the PC victory in 1971. In their view, Social Credit support was rooted in rural Alberta, whereas urban dwellers were prepared to support a different party. Thus as Alberta urbanized, Social Credit was bound to fall.

> Social Credit, which was basically a rural, small town, and lower middle-class movement, had little chance of surviving in a society which was not only increasingly urban and middle class but was also one in which urban values had penetrated rural areas. The Conservative victory was not based primarily on superior campaigning or on issues, but was more an indication of provincial trends of urbanization, secularization, increasing geographical mobility and affluence (Palmer and Palmer 1976, 123-124).

One sector of the population that had never strongly supported Social Credit was professionals. The development of the petroleum industry increased the proportion of professionals and other upper middle class elements in the Alberta populace, thus expanding the potential support for the PCs. This kind of change in the class composition contributed to the ultimate demise of Social Credit. The Palmers recognize that other factors, such as Lougheed's leadership, played a role in the 1971 election. But they are emphatic that these factors were not decisive: "social factors were of primary importance" (1976, 125).

Tom Flanagan has offered another explanation based on population changes, but his explanation rests on geographical rather than class considerations. In his view, there are four politically significant regions in Alberta: the metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary, the Northern part of the province (i.e., north of Edmonton), the mountain area, and then the "heartland" which is comprised of the rest of the province (the rural area and small urban centres south of Edmonton and east of the mountains). Social Credit support was anchored in the heartland, and most opposition MLAs were elected from the three other regions. As Alberta urbanized, the balance of power between the regions changed, with the heartland losing out, especially to the cities. Even in 1971 the heartland voted for Social Credit but the other regions went PC. "The average Social Credit vote was 49 percent in the heartland ridings, but only 38 percent in the big cities, 37 percent in the mountains, and 38 percent in the north" (Flanagan 1973, 8). With a greater percentage of the population in its three weakest areas, Social Credit lost power.

> During the long years of Social Credit power, rapid urbanization connected with the resource boom gradually changed the balance of voting power among the provincial regions, even though the regions themselves remained identifiably the same as in 1915 or 1921. The retirement of Premier Manning, the utter collapse of the Liberals, and the aggressive leadership of Peter Lougheed made it possible for this new balance of social forces to receive political expression. By attracting new voters and former Liberal supporters, the Conservatives were able, for the first time since the U.F.A. victory in 1921, to break the domination of the agrarian heartland over provincial politics (Flanagan 1973, 8).

Although Flanagan's analysis focuses on regions, he shares the view that it was fundamental changes in the population itself that undercut Social Credit support and led to the PC victory.

The Historical Circumstances View

Edward Bell argues against the social change thesis and instead offers the view that specific historical circumstances led to the PC victory. By carefully analyzing election data, Bell finds much that doesn't fit with what the social change thesis would suggest. For example, if the social change thesis were correct, then one would expect to find that Social Credit electoral support would be gradually declining, at least during the 1950s and 1960s. Instead, there is relatively consistent support until the electoral loss of 1971. Furthermore, with regard to support on an occupational basis, there is a real discrepancy with regard to people engaged in agriculture. Whereas the social change thesis sees Social Credit support to be strongest in rural areas, farmers voted 51 percent PC to only 33 percent Social Credit in 1971 (Bell 1993, 464, 468-469). The empirical data is relatively weak in supporting the view that a change in the class composition in Alberta led to the Social Credit defeat. "The Conservatives' narrow victory in the province (as measured by the percentage of the popular vote) was more a result of shifting preferences within occupational categories than major changes to the class structure" (Bell 1993, 471).

Instead of the social change thesis, Bell believes the PC victory can be explained by three factors: leadership, issues, and organization. The resignation of Ernest Manning as Premier in 1968 was a major blow to Social Credit. Harry Strom was chosen as his successor, but Strom did not appear to be a strong leader. In contrast, Bell argues that Peter Lougheed was very charismatic, had a good television image, and had been working hard to build his party. Many people were impressed by Lougheed and cool to Strom. Lougheed's leadership cannot be discounted as a major factor in the election of

1971. Two particular election issues worked against Social Credit. A dispute about revenue between Edmonton Telephones and Alberta Government Telephones had arisen and the government took the side of AGT. This alienated many Edmontonians. As well, the government was involved in a struggle with the Civil Service Association (CSA), the union of provincial employees. This also hurt the government in Edmonton. On top of these issues, while Manning was still Premier he wrote a book calling for a merger of the federal Social Credit and PC Parties. His plan didn't work, but likely still had an impact in convincing Social Credit supporters that the PC Party was an acceptable alternative. Finally, the PC organization was more competent than the Social Credit organization. For example, the PCs relied extensively on television advertising while Social Credit had little television advertising, and Social Credit reduced its advertising during the final week of the campaign because organizers felt they were going to win. These factors help to explain why people would vote for the PCs rather than Social Credit in 1971 (Bell 1993, 471-475).

An earlier article by Elton and Goddard also sees leadership as playing an important role in the PC victory. In their view, "Probably the most beneficial events during the 1968 to 1971 period for the Conservative Party were the decision of Premier E.C. Manning to retire from provincial politics and the Social Credit Party's subsequent decision to elect Harry Strom as their party leader and premier" (1979, 52). Strom did not have a strong leadership image and so a real "leadership void" seemed to result in Alberta. In contrast, Lougheed projected an image of "youth, aggressiveness, and competency." This leadership discrepancy drew people away from Social Credit and towards the PCs. Elton and Goddard also note, however, that at least one quarter of the voters in 1971 had not voted in Alberta in 1967, and these votes disproportionately supported the PCs. Thus "a substantial change in the makeup of the electorate was also an important feature of the PC victory" (Elton and Goddard 1979, 53, 54, 67).

Although that victory cannot be attributed to any one single factor, it seems in retrospect that Peter Lougheed played a crucial role. He rebuilt the Alberta PC Party virtually single-handedly and put it in a position of electoral credibility. Certainly without him the PCs would not have formed the government in 1971. His leadership was essential, not only to the 1971 victory, but to the continued domination of Alberta politics by the provincial PC Party into the 1980s.

THE POLITICAL CHANGES

The new PC government took on a very active role in many policy areas, and this was a significant change from the previous Social Credit government. As noted, the Social Credit government had a rather laissez-faire policy with regards to the oil industry, and that can probably be said of its economic policy in general. However, the PCs quickly became very active in the oil industry and other areas of the economy.

> Important Conservative interventions were the establishment of the Alberta Energy Company in 1974, the purchase of Pacific Western Airlines in the same year, and the construction of the Syncrude plant at Fort McMurray. Royalties on Alberta's depleting oil and gas resources were also increased during this period. In 1976, the government established the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and armed it with a broad mandate. Among other things, the Trust Fund was to invest provincial resource revenues so as to strengthen and diversify the provincial economy (Tupper 1986, 99).

The PC government was so interventionist, in fact, that it caused a kind of crisis for Alberta's social democrats.

> The Conservatives' forays into the economy and their willingness to employ state powers in defence of provincial interests blurred many of the traditional distinctions between Alberta's political parties. The NDP, as a party proud of its commitment to an active public sector, was particularly troubled by Lougheed's interventions. For within a few years in the early 1970s, the Conservatives had implemented, in whole or in part, many traditional NDP policies including increased resource royalties, expanded public intervention in the oil and gas industries, and a plan for economic diversification (Tupper 1986, 99-100).

Tupper also says that "the early Lougheed administration, far from being a passive, 'right-wing' government, was in fact an interventionist, urban-based, government of the centre" (1986, 101).

After the early interventionist period the Lougheed government seemed to step back for a while. However, it then took a more interventionist stance once again in the early 1980s, most notably with the release of a "White Paper" on industrial policy. Although this White Paper seemed to indicate a decreased commitment to economic diversification, it still called for an active role for the provincial government in order for Alberta to achieve its economic potential. The government would undertake pro-business intervention.

> Among other things, the government envisioned "even bolder action" in the support of mega-projects, the identification of specific sectors requiring support, an enhanced use of tax incentives, a more active state role in determining priorities in education, and an expanded role for the public sector in the promotion of exports (Tupper 1986, 102).

Strange as it may seem to some, many Alberta businessmen were very concerned about these policies. They were not favourable to any government intervention in the economy, even of the kind undertaken by Lougheed. One writer at the time noted that "business in general feels nervous with Lougheed, whom it thinks has 'socialist' tendencies" (Foster 1979, 256).

> In Calgary's corporate towers, the Premier is sometimes referred to as "Litmus" Lougheed, because he "went in blue and came out pink." His grab for the spoils of the OPEC increase by raising provincial oil royalties, his takeover of Pacific Western Airlines, and the creation of the Alberta Energy Company were all seen as dangerously "leftist" tendencies (Foster 1979, 257).

Lougheed was certainly not just an agent for the business community, he was very much his own man.

In sum, the PC government was obviously an activist government, especially in contrast to the previous Social Credit administration. Manning had been primarily concerned with maintaining a friendly environment for American oil companies.

Lougheed was more concerned with ensuring that Alberta would benefit from its resources to the greatest extent possible. . That required a significant change in policy. However, that active role for the government was not confined to natural resource policy, it spilled over into other areas as well.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

Aside from the policy changes enacted by the PCs, changes to the way government was run were also made. Lougheed was careful to place "his loyal followers in key positions. During his first term Lougheed took a giant step in reorganizing the civil service, replacing 70 per cent of all senior deputy ministers who held key positions" (Hustak 1979, 140). Not only were many civil servants replaced, but in some respects their influence was diminished.

> Lougheed makes it a point of his policy to keep staff people out of the decision-making process. . . . In the Lougheed government, policy is initiated and set by *elected* members; staff members look after administrative things like helping to answer the mail, handling schedules, arranging appointments, setting up meetings, and so on. The minister, after party conferences, caucus and Cabinet, is then in a position to set policy and direction for the department (Wood 1985, 192).

Lougheed also made changes in the method of choosing and changing cabinets. "[H]e moved away from the notion that teachers should be made ministers of the Department of Education, doctors ministers of health, and so on. He felt that if you put a teacher in education, you would get pre-conceived ideas; the best idea would be for a minister to start from scratch" (Wood 1985, 188). After the 1975 and 1979 elections Lougheed changed the portfolios of every minister in cabinet. "The theory behind this unorthodox practice was that ministers would not become enamoured of (and thus captured by) their own department bureaucrats. There was little or no incentive for 'building an empire'" (Wood 1985, 188).

This same point is confirmed by other sources as well. Allan Jamha noted that Lougheed himself made this point in a presentation he gave at the University of Alberta in 1987. "Lougheed maintains that previous knowledge of the portfolio was not important and in fact was probably a detriment" (Jamha 1988, 38). Former PC cabinet minister Roy Farran's view was "that Lougheed liked the Harvard School of Business principle of having a generalist in charge as minister and of hiring the specialists as deputy ministers and department staff" (Jamha 1988, 38). When Jamha asked former Education Minister Lou Hyndman why he had been selected for that portfolio, Hyndman included in his answer the following: "Premier Lougheed tended to choose portfolios for Cabinet ministers that were outside their own field of expertise; that is, he tended toward having a generalist in charge. It was also important to come into the portfolio without having any of the various interest groups thinking I was their spokesman" (in Jamha 1988, 155-156). Clearly, this was a distinct feature of Lougheed's cabinet selection procedure.

Another peculiar practice of Lougheed was the way he would gather information. When he needed information about a problem he would rarely consult official organizations. "Lougheed tries instead to keep in touch with a selected group of people around the province that he phones or talks to over a meal. He has certain people he calls for industrial reactions and ideas, a certain group for agriculture, for financial matters, for education, for energy" (Wood 1985, 193).

It should also be pointed out that changes were made in the way that caucus was handled. Due to the large majorities that the PCs received in the 1975, 1979, and 1982 elections, there was little opposition to face in the Legislature. However, such a large caucus could also present problems such as internal squabbling. Lougheed therefore placed every government MLA on a task force, study group, or committee to keep them all busy. As well, "[p]olicy conferences were held every fall, and the caucus met daily when the legislature was sitting. The meetings sometimes were lengthy, and even when the legislature was not sitting, caucus would come together once a month or as vital issues arose" (Pal 1992, 20). The caucus also played an important role in policy.

> The real debates and discussions over policy took place in caucus; the real decisions were made in cabinet. Peter Lougheed dominated both, but he ensured that there was genuine debate and, on lesser issues, caucus control and sometimes veto over policy. It is unquestionable, however, that Lougheed had a firm grip on the party (Pal 1992, 21).

The impression that Lougheed was firmly in control is universal. Many accounts of his government refer to Lougheed's control. Even his cabinet ministers saw it that way. Former cabinet minister Al Adair put it this way:

> The thing I liked best about him was that he was a doer, a hands-on person. We needed that in the province from 1971 until he left office in the mid-1980s. He ruled with an iron fist, starting with increases in the oil royalties, through a number of reforms for native people and for municipalities, to the battle over the bloody National Energy Program, which brought Alberta to its knees. Peter was organized to the N-th degree. Those who dealt with him on a daily basis considered the premier perfectly programmed at all times. I doubt he did anything that wasn't part of a master plan (1994, 97).

Adair also makes reference to Lougheed's informal information network that kept him informed on various issues.

> Without any question, Peter was a hands-on leader. One of his many gifts was an uncanny knowledge of what was happening at every level. He made regular trips around the legislature offices, walking in unannounced. He knew each person's name and would stop to talk to everyone in the office. Talk about having your finger on the pulse of government (1994, 96).

It seems that Lougheed had extraordinary personal qualities that enabled him to maintain an unquestioned dominance of the government. As for his leadership style, it was said that "Lougheed runs the Albertan Cabinet like a corporate boardroom" (Foster 1979, 251).

Assessment

The change in Alberta's government in 1971 was extremely significant. The new PC government made many important changes in policy that reflected a different view of the government's role in the economic development of the province. As well, changes were implemented to ensure that policy would be made by elected officials rather than bureaucrats. Lougheed's personal control of the government played an important role in the direction of policy as he seemed determined to fulfill his vision for the province. The period of 1971 to 1985 can accurately be described as the "Lougheed Revolution."

THE LOUGHEED GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION

The Social Credit Party came to power in Alberta in 1935 and remained as the governing party until 1971. A relatively large number of Social Credit MLAs had been teachers, and the Social Credit government was very active in implementing education policy that was favoured by teachers and other educational professionals. This contrasted strongly with the previous Liberal and United Farmers of Alberta governments which opposed most of the demands of the Alberta Teachers' Association and were unwilling to undertake the changes to the education system that most professional educators believed were necessary. But under Social Credit the "education elite" had a strong hand in the direction of the education system and worked reasonably well with the government.

This situation would change again with the election of the Progressive Conservatives in 1971. During the PCs' first term, 1971-1975, there was little indication that a drastic change in education policy was imminent. But after being re-elected in 1975, the PC government became increasingly interested in redirecting education policy. Indeed, it was during the first few years after 1975 that a basic change in education policy was initiated, a change that would ultimately culminate in the education policy changes of the Klein government in the mid-1990s. It will become clear, then, that Ralph Klein did not undertake novel policies, but simply extended the policy that was first developed under Peter Lougheed and continued under Don Getty. It was during Lougheed's tenure as Premier that the Department of Education began regaining power at the expense of school boards, that more educational options outside of the traditional public system began to be offered, that greater emphasis was placed on testing students and raising educational standards, and the ATA became increasingly seen as an opponent of the government. These are the same educational policy areas where the Klein government is seen as having made the most impact. Klein, however, was simply maintaining educational policy initiatives that had originated almost 20 years before.

The Social Credit Education Legacy

With the election of Social Credit in 1935 William Aberhart, a professional teacher, became Minister of Education (as well as Premier). He was extremely favourable to the demands of the ATA and other educational professionals. Among other initiatives, teaching was accorded professional status and "progressive education" (an educational philosophy developed by John Dewey) became the dominant influence in Alberta's education system. The ATA's leadership and most other education professionals strongly held to the perspective of progressive education, and these "progressivists" pushed for further reforms, such as the creation of a Faculty of Education and the raising of teachers' postsecondary training. They were successful in convincing the Social Credit government to implement these changes. "The obvious successes of this professional project (within the context of the general expansion of the education system) ensured the progressivist leadership acceptance by, and dominance over, the teaching profession for the next four decades" (Runte 1992, 466). Furthermore, the education elites became extremely influential over Social Credit education policy. "Armed with Ph.D.s in educational administration or other specializations, the education elite was able to assert a knowledge monopoly over education policy" (Runte 1992, 466). In fact, Runte argues that "the Social Credit caucus was inclined to give the education elite carte blanche on education policy" (1992, 467).

Thus the education elite benefitted from its strong influence over education policy under the Social Credit government. However, in this sense it also became dependent on the continued survival of that government. "The sudden collapse of Social Credit left the education establishment dangerously exposed. The teachers' professional project was now at risk, not only because the the [sic] progressivist faction had been so long and deeply entrenched, but because teachers' claims to professionalism had been grounded almost entirely in progressivist ideology" (Runte 1992, 469).

The Progressive Conservatives

When the PCs came to power in 1971 they brought with them two features that would distinguish them from Social Credit in the area of education policy: a different educational ideology, and their own administrative competence. Whereas Social Credit had for the most part been comfortable with progressive education, the PCs generally had a view that education should focus on the "basics," namely, skills that were necessary for employment. As well, unlike Social Credit, the PCs could draw on a large amount of administrative experience due to their own professional and business backgrounds (Runte 1992, 467-468).

> Thus, with the election of the Progressive Conservatives, the role of the education elite was severely curtailed. Instead of automatically deferring to the administrative expertise of the senior Ministerial officials, the Conservatives supplied their own. The predominance of lawyers and graduates of business administration in the Conservative caucus meant that their professional credentials were at least as prestigious as those of the education establishment, whom they in any case tended to dismiss as 'ivory tower' types out of touch with the real world. The Conservatives entered the arena of education policy with their own procedures, techniques, and measures, and with the conviction that spending on education must be brought within bounds (Runte 1992, 468).

For education policy, then, the election of the PCs represented a tremendous break with the past. This new government was not going to allow teachers and other education professionals the degree of influence that they had had under Social Credit.

> Not only did teachers lose the ideological and personal linkages they had enjoyed under the previous administration, they had become an obstacle to the new political elite consolidating its control over the education system. As a major instrument of both economic policy and ideological hegemony, control over the schools is vital to any government. Since the existing education establishment was by definition committed to the wrong goals, it was necessary to disenfranchise the teaching

> profession and to assume direct legislative control over education policy (Runte 1992, 469).

An example of how the PCs assumed "direct legislative control over education policy" was the determination of the "Goals of Basic Education for Alberta." Prior to the PC administration, various curriculum committees composed of professional educators would periodically review and revise the goals of education for different grade levels in Alberta. The PC government, however, decided that there should be a comprehensive statement of educational goals for the province, and that these goals should be approved by the Legislature. The setting of educational goals would no longer be a task reserved exclusively for professional educators. The first moves in this direction occurred after the 1975 election. The new Minister of Education, Julian Koziak, decided to review the process for curriculum policy making in the province. "The Government had concluded that the educational community was too influential in the direction in which education was moving. Educators were perceived to lack understanding of what the needs of society were generally, and what the public demanded of public education specifically" (Fennell 1985, 82). In 1976 Koziak established the Curriculum Policies Board (CPB) to oversee the development of curriculum and to help develop the Goals of Basic Education. Half of the CPB's members were to be professional educators, and the other half were not.

In 1978 the Legislature adopted the Goals of Basic Education. The process involved in writing those goals included non-educators and legislators, thus making a distinct break with the previous method of determining educational goals. "[T]he power of the non-educational systems had increased at the expense of the educational system. The elected officials of Government had assumed a more central role in policy-making also at the expense of the power of the educational system, and in particular, at the expense of the power of the Department of Education" (Fennell 1985, 193). Julian Koziak was explicit about the need for legislators to control the direction of education.

> The goals statement came about because of criticism that schools were not doing the job they were supposed to do by law or according to the expectations of parents and the public. There was also the feeling that education should not be the exclusive domain of professional educators. It was a sign that the public wanted to have control of education. There seemed to be a need for the province to provide the political direction for education (in Jamha 1988, 75).

Progressive Conservative Activism in Education

The determination of goals in education is just one example, but there are many others. Writing in 1979, Krawchenko noted that "the Lougheed government is disposed to take an active, interventionist stance in the area of education, just as it does in other areas" (25).

> In the last several years it has directly and assertively become involved: in setting up the Curriculum Policies Board (CPB), in legislating the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta, in establishing the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement (MACOSA), in allocating substantial monies (8.4 million dollars) from the Heritage Trust Fund to develop curricular materials outside the normal structures, in initiating a move towards a province-wide examination system, in placing the education system under the fiscal restraint policy (while the administration of justice, for example, was exempt), in ordering the striking Edmonton teachers back to work, and in causing the closure of many schools and the rationalization of the teaching force (Krawchenko 1979, 25-26).

Five years later, in 1984, Krawchenko wrote that this "trend of direct intervention and control has continued to the present" (7).

> In 1980 the government announced it would be introducing a broad range of evaluation programs throughout the province, to include student, teacher, program, school and system evaluation. In 1984 provincial exams have been implemented; achievement tests are being regularly administered; schools and systems are being evaluated at great cost; and school leaving requirements have been altered in accordance with the new evaluation policy. The Program of Studies for almost every curriculum area have been revised with greater emphasis on measurable, behavioural objectives. The School Act is being rewritten. The restraint program has continued to the present, being reflected this year in a 0% budget increase. The Board of Teacher Education and Certification has been disbanded; the Teaching Profession Act is under review (Krawchenko 1984, 7-8).

"These changes have not been arbitrary, of course. Looking back over the past five or six years it is easy to see how all of this has operated toward a consistent direction in educational change" (Krawchenko 1984, 8). Indeed, and this direction in educational change has continued to the present time and is the root of the educational policy initiatives of the Klein government.

The changes wrought by the PC government are not just external changes in education policy. There have also been internal changes in the Department of Education that accord with the new direction that they have been going.

> [I]t is generally accepted that the last Deputy Minister with progressivist leanings retired in 1982 and that the current Deputy's reorganization of the Department effectively purged the last remainders of progressivist influence from the top levels of the hierarchy. Most of those at the Director level and higher are, if not actual card-carrying members of the Progressive Conservative Party, then at least sympathetic to its ideological program. The slow but continuous attrition of progressivist officials, and the selective promotion and outside recruitment of replacements supportive of the government's policies, has allowed a succession of conservative Ministers to gradually erase the progressivists' hold over the education leadership. In general terms, conservative influence has penetrated from the top down, to reshape the top levels of the education hierarchy from nearly independent professional elite into a bureaucratic management (Runte 1992, 144).

Thus the change in external policy has paralleled a replacement of Department officials not sympathetic with the direction of that change.

Reno Bosetti, who became Deputy Minister in 1982, confirmed in our interview that there was a shake-up when he arrived in 1982 in which people who disagreed with the government's direction in education left the department. In his view, it was important that departmental officials shared the "same vision" for education. Thus those who held to a progressive vision were out-of-step with Bosetti's (and the government's) vision and had to leave.

Further support for the view that the PCs consciously took education policy in a different direction during the 1970s comes from comments by Lougheed himself. During the debate in the Legislature about the Goals of Basic Education, he said the following:

> Frankly, at times I have felt apprehensive at the danger of not having such goals, which leaves it beyond the scope of the public policy of this Legislature, to the conclusions or diverse aspirations of the education establishment in the province, effective and dedicated as they are, to determine on an *ad hoc* basis what should be the basic course content and curriculum development of our education system

> (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1189).

Lougheed wanted the government rather than the education establishment to determine the goals of education. He realized that this was a break with previous practice.

> [I]t had, unfortunately in our view, been a tradition in legislatures throughout Canada, and in the Alberta Legislature to a degree, to abdicate our responsibility to establish public policy in this area. I'm very pleased that we're embarking on this discussion today to bring back where it should be the appropriate responsibility that rests on our shoulders and cannot be abdicated (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1190).

Furthermore, he noted that at least some members of the education establishment were not comfortable with the government's efforts to assert its authority in this area.

> Mr. Speaker, a few but not many educators, or I suppose representatives of the education establishment in the province, have expressed some concern at the vision of government interference in this matter of education. I am glad that it's a small, not a large number of people who have held to that view, because I think it's disturbing. I would have thought that they would welcome this Legislative Assembly to be debating the question of what the goals of schooling and education would be. I think the vast majority do (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1189).

Lougheed clearly wanted to remove education policy decisions away from the education establishment and back to the government.

This was also a point made by Reno Bosetti in his interview. Lougheed was unhappy to have teachers being more influential in education than the childrens' parents. Furthermore, according to Bosetti, Lougheed thought that education in Alberta was too liberal -- he didn't like the "soft, mushy" education that was taking place.

From the information presented here it is apparent that the PC government of Peter Lougheed initiated significant change in the area of education policy, notably after 1975. It is likely that the changes that began under Lougheed represent the most significant government efforts in the education policy area since William Aberhart was Education Minister. At the time Lougheed resigned many of the changes that had been initiated were not complete. They continued under Don Getty. In fact, the momentum of the changes continued into the government of Ralph Klein.

Teachers in the Provincial Cabinet

Another area in which there was dramatic change with the election of the PCs was in the composition of the provincial cabinet for there were to be considerably fewer teachers in the PC cabinet (and caucus) than there had been during the Social Credit period. Before the Social Credit period very few cabinet ministers had been teachers. However, throughout the Social Credit period teachers formed a larger proportion of the cabinet than any other occupation, by far. After the election of the PCs, teachers were once again relegated to a relatively minor role. Perhaps this helps to explain the changes in education policy initiated by the PC government.

H.L. Malliah did a study of the composition of all of Alberta's provincial cabinets from 1905 to 1967. During the Liberal period, up to 1921, only 5.6 per cent of cabinet members were teachers. Instead, the Liberal cabinets were dominated by lawyers who made up 44.4 per cent of the cabinet, followed by businessmen who made up 22.2 per cent. A dramatic change occurred with the election of the United Farmers of Alberta. In the UFA cabinets, 71.4 per cent of members were farmers, compared to 11.1 per cent in the Liberal cabinets. Lawyers comprised 14.4 per cent, businessmen 7.1per cent, and there were no teachers in the UFA cabinet. Again, a big change occurred with the election of Social Credit in 1935. From 1935 to 1967, the cabinet was dominated by teachers, who made up 37.2 per cent of the members, with businessmen and farmers each comprising 16.3 per cent, and lawyers only 7 per cent (Malliah 1970, 130). In Malliah's words, "We see a meteoric rise of cabinet members who pursued the teaching occupation from 5.6% in the Liberal period and zero in the U.F.A. period to 37.2% in the Social Credit era" (1970, 129). Clearly, teachers were a very powerful presence in the Social Credit government.

With the election of the PCs in 1971, teachers were forced to take a back seat to lawyers and businessmen. As Leadbeater notes, "Of the 45 Conservative members in the 75-seat legislature, the overwhelmingly largest group were businessmen and lawyers. Many of the lawyers had substantial corporate involvements, and constituted well over half the Tory representation." And importantly, "Virtually every cabinet member was a professional and/or businessman" (1984, 43). According to the occupational backgrounds of Lougheed's first cabinet ministers listed in the Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1972 and a discussion with the Hon. Allan Warrack, only 2 of 22, or 8.2 per cent, were teachers. Teachers lost representation in cabinet, and therefore in the government. It is likely that this contributed to the new government's changing attitude towards education policy, and its increasingly belligerent stance towards the educational establishment.

The Change in Education Ideology: Social Credit to Progressive Conservative

Aside from the more purely political change that occurred in 1971 (i.e., the education establishment lost its strong linkage with the government), Runte (1981) claims that an ideological change occurred as well. However, the claim that an ideological change occurred is restricted to the area of education: It is not being claimed that the Progressive Conservatives held to a distinctly different ideology from Social Credit in other policy areas. The ideological change that occurred was this: whereas Social Credit education policy was based on what Runte calls a "human capital model" of education, the Conservatives held to a "manpower model" of education. This, in his view, would explain the change in education policy.

The human capital model was based on the view that education increases people's ability to contribute to the economy and thus education drives economic growth and development. The greater the number of people who receive an education, and the more education that each receives, the better the economy will be. Investing in "human capital" leads inevitably to economic returns. The manpower model shares the view that education can be crucial to economic success. However, it doesn't see education per se as inevitably leading to economic growth. Rather, it postulates that education programs should be provided that prepare people for specific jobs that are needed in the economy. It's not enough that someone gets an education, he or she needs to be educated only for a specific task in the economy, or else his or her education is a waste of time and money (Runte 1981, 16-25). Whereas the human capital model accepts that "any learning [is] an investment in human capital," "the manpower model rejects 'any' learning in favour of specific, vocationally and economically 'useful' learning" (Runte 1981, 25).

There are three groups that Runte identifies as being important in the development of education policy during the period under consideration: the education elite, the Social Credit party in power, and the Progressive Conservative party, first as official opposition, and then in power. The education elite generally held a specific "progressive" view of education. Among other things, this view emphasized personal development through education. The more education someone receives, the more self-fulfilled he or she will be. And the higher the proportion of the population receiving education, the greater the proportion of fulfilled citizens that society will have. This perspective can be seen in the Worth Report (Runte 1981, 102-107). Thus it is clear that "in Alberta the education elite's own ideology was also completely compatible with the human capital model. . . . The human capital model therefore became part of the ideology of the education elite" (Runte 1981, 107).

The ideology of the Social Credit party has been characterized as "populist" by a number of observers. Runte believes that Social Credit's populism placed an especially strong emphasis on education (as a result of the use of Social Credit "study groups" early in the movement's history, and the strong linkage between the early movement and evangelical proselytism) and an emphasis on the social welfare of the individual. This latter aspect became especially pronounced during the mid-1960s when "human resource development" played an increasing role in the Social Credit government's programs. The 1967 White Paper on Human Resources Development represented this kind of thinking (Runte 1981, 108-109).

> While Social Credit ideology gives priority to the needs of the individual, it is clear that the emphasis on human resources development is compatible with the human capital model. It is equally clear that the primacy of the individual implies a rejection of the manpower model, since the manpower model places the needs of the economy over those of individuals (Runte 1981, 110).

Thus both the Social Credit government and the education elite to which it was linked, held to the human capital model of education.

It will likely seem counter-intuitive to many people that Social Credit is identified here with the "progressive" views of professional educators. After all, Social Credit is often considered as a right-wing, fundamentalist, quasi-religious movement. But it needs to be remembered, as pointed out in chapter 2, that progressive education made its greatest inroads into Alberta's education system while William Aberhart was Minister of Education. Indeed, Tim Byrne, who started out as a teacher in Alberta in the mid-1920s, and worked his way up to become the last Deputy Minister of Education under the Social Credit government, stated that "progressivism in the Department of Education didn't seem to bother the Social Credit Party" (in McIntosh and Bryce 1977, 24). Byrne identified himself as a socialist and small 'l' liberal (McIntosh and Bryce 1977, 97), and noted that "I was anything but typical of the kind of person you'd expect a Social Credit government to appoint" (in McIntosh and Bryce 1977, 41). Furthermore, he had this to say about the last two Social Credit Education Ministers:

> Ray Reierson . . . was a liberal at heart. He could have been a Liberal candidate just as well as a Social Crediter. . . . Bob Clark was a liberal, which is why I found him so easy to get along with as our ideas were so often similar (in McIntosh and Bryce 1977, 43).

At least with reference to educational philosophy, there is clear evidence that Social Credit was not committed to a conservative traditionalist perspective, as one might expect. Perhaps there were Social Crediters who held that view, but they did not control education policy. Thus the view that the Social Credit government held to what Runte calls the human capital model is entirely plausible.

The Progressive Conservative party, however, rejected the human capital model of education in favour of the manpower model. In many respects, the philosophy and overall program of the Social Credit and Progressive Conservative parties were quite similar. But according to Runte, there was one major philosophical difference: "the Progressive Conservatives gave first priority to the development of the economy rather than to the needs of the individual. In the Conservative view, if one took care of the economy, the economy would take care of everything else" (Runte 1981, 112). The implication for education, of course, was that education should be geared towards contributing to the economy, i.e., supplying people trained for the jobs that the economy required. When the PCs were elected they didn't suddenly reorient the education system to this way of thinking, rather "there was a subtle shift of emphasis in government policy towards the manpower model" (Runte 1981, 115). But there definitely was a shift in thinking.

Runte neatly sums up his overall view about the ideological change that was relevant for Alberta's education system as follows:

> In Alberta, the human capital model was represented by the Social Credit Party (as explicitly set forth in the White Paper on Human Resources) and the education elite (as can be seen in the Worth Report). The manpower model was represented by the Progressive Conservative Party, as is implicit in their insistence that the needs of the economy should take precedence over the needs of individuals (since the former is seen as a prerequisite for the latter). The electoral victory of the Progressive Conservatives over the Social Credit in 1971 therefore also represented a shift towards the manpower model over the human capital model in Alberta (1981, 220-221).

Thus there was an ideological change insofar as education policy was concerned.

Support for Runte's view can perhaps be seen by comparing the White Paper issued by Manning and the White Paper issued by the Lougheed government in 1984, Proposals For an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985 to 1990. Runte's assertion that the Manning White Paper gives priority to the individual can be seen from the ten "principles and values" presented at the beginning of the Paper, and upon which the Paper is based. Two of the most pertinent principles are the following:

> (3) The individual human being is of supreme value and importance and ought to be regarded by governments and by society as intrinsically more important than non-human things.
>
> (5) Society exists to enhance the development of free and creative human beings and should aspire toward the provision of full opportunity for every individual in every area of human endeavor (Manning 1967, 18).

The Lougheed White Paper, while not claiming to be as comprehensive as the Manning one, appears to subordinate all other concerns to the development of Alberta's economy. It proposes a number of policy thrusts, including changes to Alberta's secondary education program, all of which are aimed specifically at preparing Alberta's economy for the future. In the conclusion, some recognition is given to the fact that "people" are not prominent in the Paper.

> Some may question the heavy emphasis on economic matters and suggest it reflects a lack of priority to social concerns. These terms are deceptive because an Industrial Strategy has as its basic objective the securing of existing jobs and the training for and encouragement of new jobs. Today this is probably the overriding "people issue" in the province (Government of Alberta 1984, 69).

Thus "people issues" are dependent on the economy. This seems to give priority to the economy as the focus of the government's concern. As such there does appear to be a difference in emphasis between the two White Papers. Manning's focuses on individuals and Lougheed's focuses on the economy. It is plausible to argue that this reflects some philosophical difference, as Runte would suggest.

Runte is not the only one to have written about this shift in educational philosophy that occurred under the PCs. Krawchenko did an analysis of discussion about education policy in the Alberta Legislature (as recorded in Hansard) from 1976 to 1984. She concluded that there had been a fundamental "about-turn in educational philosophy in less than a decade" (1984, 1). This "about-turn" began soon after the PC government's re-election in 1975. The reason the government waited until its second term to initiate changes in education policy was that "it needed time to set in place important mechanisms for effecting the adoption of its own educational perspectives" (Krawchenko 1984, 14). The mechanisms she refers to were the Curriculum Policies Board (CPB), the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement (MACOSA), and the Harder Report.

Aside from her view that the PCs were introducing a decidedly new direction in educational philosophy, Krawchenko offers support for Runte's argument in two other ways. First, she claims that former Social Credit education minister, and then leader of the Official Opposition, Robert Clark, believed that the PC government had made a distinct shift in education policy. And in her words, "the way this shift was being executed was in necessary tension with his [i.e., Clark's] populist traditions" (1984, 13). This offers some support for Runte's contention that there was a difference between the Social Credit and Progressive Conservative education philosophies. Secondly, Krawchenko argued that the PC education policy was rooted in a concern for economic priorities. A central aspect of Lougheed's program was to use the rewards of Alberta's petroleum resources to diversify the province's economy. Since "a harmonious social climate and a skilled, disciplined workforce are essential conditions for the carrying out of the economic development strategy," the education system was reoriented to achieve these goals (1984, 28). The education system was considered to be just one of the support features for the real goal which was economic development. This view clearly reflects Runte's view that the PCs saw the education system as serving the economic system.

Again, Krawchenko, like Runte, believes that the PC government changed the direction of education policy. She sees the government's determination of the "Goals of Education" in 1978 as especially significant since it placed parameters on the educational community "in the implementation of a shift in focus and perspective for schooling in Alberta" (1984, 2). Furthermore, "the combination of a number of strategic moves initiated by the government since about 1975 has had the effect of expediting this shift in focus with remarkable speed and philosophic consistency" (1984, 2).

In an interview in 1992, Dr. Walter Worth gave an account of the changing goals of education in Alberta that is consistent with the point being made here. He contrasts the focus on "economic productivity" goals in education with "civic socialization" goals. Although he doesn't mention the Social Credit or PC governments, he points to the different emphases of the 1960s and later 1970s.

> In the 1960s, civic socialization goals gained some prominence, but this gave way to a conservative backlash that emphasized economic productivity in the late 1970s. Right now, the economic goals have become paramount, much more than they ever were before, with both the federal and provincial governments. Jim Dinning's *Vision for the Nineties: A Plan of Action* and the recent *International Comparisons in Education* provincial report stress economic productivity and competition, as do several recent initiatives of the Mulroney government (in McIntosh and Hodysh 1992, 45).

He sees the change of emphasis in Alberta beginning by the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s.

Although in 1971 the political philosophies of the Social Credit and PC parties appeared virtually identical according to many observers, there probably was, in fact, an underlying difference in educational philosophy. Thus more occurred in 1971 than a simple change in elites, important as that might be, but also a change in the way the education system was to be viewed. This could help to explain why there was such a significant change in education policy by the late 1970s.

CONCLUSION

The change from a Social Credit to PC government in Alberta was more than cosmetic. It resulted in noticeable changes in a number of areas, with education policy being one of them. The new government wanted to play a more active role in education policy at the expense of educational professionals, and likely had a somewhat different perspective on education than the previous government. The significance of the change for education policy didn't really begin to appear until the PCs' second term in office, since they were preoccupied with other matters in the first term. Once the government was able to pay direct attention to education, the changes began in earnest. Now the details of education policy change can be considered.

CHAPTER 4

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Many of the most pronounced initiatives in educational restructuring undertaken by the Klein government affected educational governance and finance. The strengthening of school councils, the reduction in the number of school boards, and the removal of school boards' taxation powers are three of these. Generally speaking, the changes initiated by Klein's administration led to a transfer of power away from the school board level, both downward to school councils, and upward to the Department of Education. "[W]hile centralizing and controlling budgeting and funding decisions, as well as basic curriculum development, the ministry has decentralized other types of decision-making by delegating some authority to individual schools" (Kneebone and McKenzie 1997, 188).

The areas of education governance and funding provide the greatest challenge to the view that Klein's education policies were rooted in the Lougheed period. There are tremendous inconsistencies between PC policy in the area of governance and funding during the 1970s and after 1994. One example is the proliferation of school jurisdictions that occurred after the PCs took power in 1971, only to be severely reversed in 1994. However, the breaking point between the policies of the 1970s and the Klein period was not in 1994, it was in 1982. In other words, in the areas of education governance and funding there can be said to be two different periods of PC policy, 1971 to 1982, and 1982 to the present. The impetus for the Klein reforms in these areas was rooted in the Lougheed era.

FUNDING

Shortly after the PCs came to power the number of different grants for education funding began increasing. As well, the provincial share of education funding began decreasing, leading to greater financial inequities in the education funding system, both in mill rates and in per pupil expenditures. Mill rates were high in some jurisdictions but low in others, and per pupil expenditures were also quite variable between jurisdictions. As a result of the selection of a new Deputy Minister of Education and the provincial government's emerging financial problems, a new education funding structure was implemented in 1984, greatly simplifying the grant system and giving the Department of Education increased control over some school board policies. The government unsuccessfully tried to take control of non-residential property levies in 1987, but it was clear that the government favoured increased control over education funding. The deficit crisis provided the government an opportunity to take control of all education funding, and it did so in 1994.

Background Information

One of the major issues that has faced Alberta's education system throughout the province's history has been that of financial equity and equal opportunity for students. Some school jurisdictions are wealthier than others and can therefore afford to spend more on education producing, presumably, a better education for their students. One of the earliest attempts to deal with this equity problem involved the consolidation of school jurisdictions into larger administrative units. Although this was an improvement, it did not solve the problem. Both the Social Credit and PC governments took steps to help improve the situation, but the ultimate solution, equal funding for every student in the province, was not achieved until the restructuring of the education system under the Klein administration. Although the solution adopted by Klein's government (complete provincial control of education funding) is quite radical in historical perspective, solutions along this line had been discussed for years before it was actually implemented. It was well known that the provision of equal educational opportunities for all of Alberta's students would require a strong provincial role and that this would involve a degree of centralization and thus a concomitant loss of local autonomy for school jurisdictions.

In 1961 the Social Credit government made a significant change in the way it funded education by establishing the School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF). The money for this fund was obtained from general revenues and from "a uniform province-wide levy on residential and non-residential property." The SFPF funds were distributed among school jurisdictions "on the basis of their pupil enrolment, teachers' salaries, transportation costs, and capital expenditure." Schools boards could also levy "supplementary requisitions" to make up the difference between the SFPF and their total expenditures. As a result of the province-wide levy on property, there was a more equal sharing of money between the wealthier and poorer school jurisdictions. In 1969 further changes were made to the arrangements for financing education by the provincial government, notably the move from allocating funds on a per pupil and per teacher basis to a classroom unit basis (Alberta Education 1982, 1).

After the PC government came to power, it too made major changes to education financing. One PC campaign promise had been to remove residential property from the SFPF levy. The new government set up the Task Force on Provincial Municipal Fiscal Arrangements to investigate the division of responsibilities between the province and local authorities. As recommended by the Task Force, the government did remove residential property from the SFPF in 1974, and then removed farm land from it in 1975 (Masson 1994, 439-440).

In 1973 the instructional component of the SFPF was changed from the classroom unit basis to a per pupil grant. Furthermore, under the School Grants Regulations (SGR), many new special education grants (which dealt with such things as early childhood services and learning disabilities) were established. The number of SGR grants rose from 10 in 1972 to 24 in 1980. Over this period there was a change from an almost exclusive reliance on the SFPF, which distributed funds equally, to an increasing reliance on SGR grants which distributed funds differentially. Between 1972 and 1978 the proportion of total revenues to school jurisdictions from the SGR grants more than doubled, while the proportion from the SFPF declined constantly after 1974. As well, during this period local supplementary requisitions increased (Alberta Education 1982, 2). In fact, "for all Alberta school jurisdictions between 1975 and 1981 the local share has increased from almost 18% to approximately 30%" (Alberta Education 1982, 13). As locally generated funds accounted for increasingly greater shares of education funding, the discrepancy between wealthy and poor regions became larger, leading to perceived differences in the quality of education provided (Alberta Education 1982, 13).

In an effort to deal with this developing situation, in 1975 the government created the Supplementary Requisitions Equalization Grant (SREG). The purpose of this grant was to ensure that each student receive at least 62 percent of the average province-wide per pupil expenditure. Although this did have an equalizing effect, there was still a discrepancy between poor and wealthy districts (Hanson 1985, 31).

Task Force on School Finance

Throughout the first 20 years of the PC government, the province's share of education funding dropped steadily, with the local jurisdictions making up the balance. In 1972, the province's share of education funding was 83.4 percent and the local share was 16.7 percent. By 1978, it was 73 percent to 27 percent, respectively. In 1984 it reached 64 percent versus 36 percent, and in 1989 it was 60 percent to 40 percent (Masson 1994, 441). This trend was not ultimately reversed until 1994 when the province took complete control of education funding. Interestingly, by taking complete control of education revenues, the decline in the province's share of funding would be completely masked.

As a result of concerns over the changing patterns on educational finance in the province, the Minister of Education appointed the Minister's Task Force on School

Finance in 1981 to make recommendations regarding Alberta's school finance plan. The Task Force reported in 1982. Among its recommendations were two that had important implications for financial equity. Recommendation number three was that "The provincial share of total schooling costs should be targeted towards providing an average of approximately 85% of the total expenditures of all school boards in the province, leaving an average of approximately 15% to be raised by local supplementary requisitions" (Alberta Education 1982, 15). This would enhance equity by ensuring that local taxes contributed only a small component of education finance. Recommendation number eight stated that "The Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant should be increased to provide 100% of the province-wide average yield" (Alberta Education 1982, 19). This recommendation, moving the SREG from 62 to 100 percent, would lead to each student in Alberta having an equal education expenditure. Clearly, the desire to equalize per pupil education resources throughout the province was a goal of the Task Force, and this was recognized as having negative consequences for the autonomy of local school jurisdictions. As the Task Force noted, "if the province's share becomes unduly large, the autonomy of local school boards might be threatened" (Alberta Education 1982, 13). There would be a direct connection between equalizing education finance and centralizing control over education finance in the provincial government.

Collapse of the Oil Boom and Changing Government Policy

The Task Force recommendations, which would have cost the government about 500 million dollars per year, were never implemented (Masson 1994, 440). The year that the Task Force released its report, 1982, was the same year that Alberta's "oil boom" collapsed and the government began to experience financial problems. Fiscal restraint became a priority for the government, and so no new large expenditures for education (or any other department) were available. Thus pressures to change education funding in order to achieve equity goals would be joined by emerging pressures to change education funding due to decreasing government resource revenues.

Aside from the government's deteriorating financial situation, another significant event occurred in 1982 that would dramatically effect the government's education policy: the selection of Reno Bosetti as Deputy Minister. It was probably these two factors, more than anything else, that led to the government's new direction in favour of increasingly centralized education funding. This new direction would soon be evident in the Management and Finance Plan (MFP) developed by Bosetti at the end of 1983, and then the government's attempt to take control of non-residential property levies through the new School Act proposals of 1987. It was this new thinking in favour of increased provincial control of education funding that would culminate in the Klein education policy of 1994.

According to Decore and Pannu, the government's new focus on centralizing education funding was first evident in the new capital finance plan for schools. As they put it, "The first element in the new pattern of increasing provincial control was the reintroduction in 1983 of a province-wide system of priority assignment for school construction that took little account of such local differences as the size or the growth of communities" (1989, 153). Here they are referring to the 1984-88 School Capital Funding Plan which states its intention to foster "local planning which can yield local outcomes compatible with provincial priorities" (Alberta Education 1984, 6). Whether or not they are correct to see coherent centralizing schemes in this funding plan, the Management and Finance Plan clearly makes such a new thrust evident.

The Management and Finance Plan

When Reno Bosetti became Deputy Minister of Education, there were a number of changes he wanted to make in the education system. One area where he wanted to make changes was in how the operations of school boards were measured. As he told

Bohac, the school boards "were focused on input not the product" whereas "I wanted to get the boards to focus on the outcome of the system, and the Minister agreed with that approach" (Bohac 1989, 95). In November 1983 the Department of Education received an additional 20 million dollars to allocate to priority areas. The extra money created an opportunity to initiate a major restructuring of the education grants system. Bosetti himself drew up a new funding scheme that would drastically change this aspect of the education system; this became the Management and Finance Plan (MFP). He told me that the MFP was his idea, and Dave King confirmed this as well. As Bosetti told Bohac, "I saw it as an opportunity personally to turn the system around and focus upon what we were trying to accomplish and less upon more and more resources to accomplish who knows . . . whatever it was" (Bohac 1989, 96).

The MFP was a completely new financing arrangement that simplified matters by dramatically reducing the number of grants provided by the Department of Education. It was "touted by the provincial government as allowing the boards greater discretion in how they use funds because they receive essentially a lump sum of money at the beginning of each school year and may spend it as they see fit" (Hanson 1985, 34). Rather than granting a certain amount for one specific purpose, having another grant for another specific purpose, et cetera, the boards would receive fewer, larger grants and have more leeway in how they were used. However, the MFP also introduced the new requirement that all jurisdictions "comply with the evaluation standards of the province" (Hanson 1985, 34). "The plan shifted the focus from inputs (funding, class size, buildings) and processes (teaching practices, transportation) to outcomes (drop out rates, student achievement, diplomas awarded, post-secondary attendance)" (Bosetti 1993, 5).

This anomoly of promoting the MFP as giving boards greater discretion while actually giving greater control to the Department of Education, is also pointed out by Decore and Pannu. The MFP was promoted by the Department of Education as granting local jurisdictions greater autonomy and flexibility, but it required them to report to the Department what they were doing.

> Contrary to promises of greater autonomy and flexibility for school jurisdictions, this new plan meant more centralized control by Alberta Education. The department's own analysis pointed out that this plan required both a higher degree of local compliance to provincial policies and guidelines and more monitoring and evaluation than previously, all with the objective of continuing budget restraint and staff reduction (Decore and Pannu 1989, 154).

Thus the MFP entailed greater provincial control over education in the province at the expense of the power of the local jurisdictions.

One aspect of the MFP was the creation of the Equity Grant that replaced the Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant as well as four other grants that contributed to equalization (Schmidt 1988, 41). In spite of this, however, inequities in per pupil spending continued to grow (Bosetti 1993, 6-7). The equity problem was worsening. But the trend towards increased provincial control over local jurisdictions was by now well established in the new system for funding education, the MFP.

Education Funding and the New School Act

The issue of educational funding had to be dealt with in the development of the new School Act. In 1987 Minister of Education Nancy Betkowski released a discussion paper entitled Equity in Education Financing (Alberta Education 1987) "to generate public discussion" on the issue by offering five possible ways of financing education in Alberta. In sum the options were as follows: option one was the staus quo – equal provincial grants to each jurisdiction, with some additional equalization grant so that the differences in per pupil expenditure aren't too drastic; option two entailed the same as option one except that the equalization grants would be greater, bringing the students in poorer regions closer to the provincial average; option three was to base provincial grants entirely on each jurisdiction's assessment base so that high assessment jurisdictions would receive little, if any, provincial money, while the lowest assessment jurisdictions would depend almost exclusively on provincial money; option four was to have the province take over all power to tax non-residential property and distribute the revenue equitably; and option five was to have the province collect one-half of the non-residential property revenue, with the local jurisdiction able to collect the other half. In Schmidt's view, "The option which appears to be most supported by the presentation of advantages and disadvantages in the Alberta Education discussion paper is option 4; the introduction of full non-residential tax revenue sharing" (1988, 46).

It is clear that option four is presented as solving many of the problems of inequity in Alberta's education finance system. However, it would also reduce the powers of local jurisdictions more than the other four options.

> Option 4 would remove school boards' ability to tax non-residential property. All non-residential property would be taxed provincially and the revenues would be redistributed to school boards. This option certainly would provide for equity in funding. It would balance out both the very high and the very low asessment areas and make residential, farm and non-residential tax burdens equitable across the province. All school districts would be assured comparable, basic revenues sufficient to provide a high standard of educational programs. By setting a provincial mill rate for all non-residential taxation for education, some incentive would be provided for businesses and industries to locate in a wider range of areas across the province (Alberta Education 1987, 14).

Important problems would also be solved.

> Currently, Alberta has a number of non-operating school jurisdictions which have access to significant amounts of corporate taxation but do not operate any schools. Option 4 would remove the incentive to establish small jurisdictions for tax purposes. At the same time, it would remove current competition between public and separate school boards for assignment of non-residential property assessment (Alberta Education 1987, 15).

The discussion paper also noted that "Many school boards, especially those with high assessment, believe that their autonomy will be eroded by this alternative" (Alberta Education 1987, 15).

Aside from its favourable presentation of option four, the authors of the discussion paper subtly undercut the autonomy of local jurisdictions in another way.

Equity in Education Financing (1987) does not list local autonomy as one of the

> eight "Principles of a School Finance Plan for Alberta", that appear, apparently for the first time, in the discussion paper. The concept of local autonomy is mentioned throughout the paper, but not as one of the key principles of a school finance plan, as it was in the 1982 Minister's Task Force Report. On the contrary, the concept is referred to as "the issue of local autonomy and control," and regarded as a possible obstacle to achieving equity in school funding in Alberta (Schmidt 1988, 48-49).

Thus it might be reasonable to suggest that the trend in the government's thinking towards greater provincial control in education is apparent from the evolution in the way "local autonomy" is discussed in government documents related to education funding.

Whether or not option four was deliberately presented as the best option available, it was accepted by the Minister of Education, Nancy Betkowski, as the way education should be financed under the new School Act. This option was incorporated into Bill 59, the first proposed bill for the new School Act. Although Bill 59 was criticized for many reasons, having the provincial government collect the education levy for all non-residential property was one aspect of the bill that received especially heavy criticism from wealthy school boards. Due to the criticism of Bill 59, in January, 1988, Betkowski produced a paper defending and explaining the most criticzed aspects of the new bill, the new funding plan being one of those aspects:

> The option of having government collect corporate taxes and redistribute them to school districts is designed to address the underlying cause of the current inequities, namely inequity in the wealth of school districts. This option would continue the authority of school boards to tax their residents but would provide for a uniform provincial mill rate for corporations (Betkowski 1988, 7-8).

Later she added, "We simply cannot accept the view that the quality of education children receive should or could be determined by the wealth of the area" (Betkowski 1988, 8). Increasing provincial control over education levies was the most practical way of dealing with this funding problem for both Betkowski (and the Getty government) and, later, the Klein administration.

There is no question that the autonomy of local jurisdictions would be compromised by this option. Its effect "would be to increase government fiscal control over school boards and to make it more difficult for school boards to maintain education spending at levels that are higher than the provincial government might wish" (Decore and Pannu 1989, 154).

As a result of heavy opposition to the idea, the province did not take control of the non-residential property education levy in 1988. As Jim Dinning told me, he also tried to take control of the corporate tax base in 1991, but was unsuccessful. However, the Klein government was able to make an even more radical change in education funding only a few years later, in the context of a changed political environment. By 1993, the PC government had been able to create a crisis atmosphere focused on the deficit and thus the concomitant need to cut spending. This crisis atmosphere provided Reno Bosetti with an opportunity to complete the changes he had wanted to make to Alberta's education system. Bruce and Schwartz write,

> Our interpretation of the events to date is that the central administrators in Alberta Education seized the 'excuse' of budget cuts to impose changes they had lacked the political power to introduce during less turbulent political times. Once teachers had accepted a 5 per cent wage roll-back, the 6.23 per cent reduction in the Education budget created little need for significant changes in the delivery of services. Nevertheless, central administrators reduced the number of school boards, equalized funding across districts, introduced charter schools and school councils, and used block funding to impose significant constraints on local authority spending (1997, 410-412).

When I read the first sentence of this quote to Reno Bosetti, he acknowledged its accuracy. The deficit crisis gave the government the ability to undertake education policy changes that were not feasible under "normal" conditions.

While the 1987 proposal involved only non-residential property, Klein's government took control of the non-residential as well as the residential property levy. Basically, the Klein government took command of all revenue slated for education purposes. Under Klein,

> the provincial government centralized the assessment and collection of educational taxes. Mill rates are to be equalized across districts and all locally collected taxes are directed to a central fund, the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF). School boards are now not allowed to levy their own taxes but are paid from the ASFF and from general revenues according to a formula based on: their respective levels of

> enrolment; the number of students in such special categories as those with severe disabilities, natives, and those studying English as a second language; the number of enhanced opportunity programs for disadvantaged students; and transportation costs (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 389).

As well as allowing for each Alberta student to be funded equally, the removal of the school boards' taxing power is "a method of ensuring that the boards would not thwart the government's tax restraint goals by raising local taxes" (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 389). Two exceptions to this removal of school boards' taxation powers need to be mentioned, however. "School boards are allowed to impose a special school tax levy, not exceeding 3 per cent of the budget of the board, if such a levy is approved by a plebiscite in a general election" (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 413). Another exception applies exclusively to separate school boards. As a result of protests by Catholics who believed their constitutional rights in education would be violated, the government decided to allow

> separate (but not public) boards the right to opt out of the proposed new funding arrangements and retain their taxation powers, although they could not set a mill rate lower than that set by the province. Where an opted out board raised a lower sum per student through local taxation than the Alberta School Foundation Fund would provide, the Fund (i.e., the province) would make up the difference. Any excess raised locally over the provincial grant would revert to the Fund (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 400).

In spite of these "concessions," a number of Catholic school boards were not satisfied, and along with the ACSTA, are pursuing legal action against the government. The Public School Boards Association of Alberta is also pursuing legal action against the government's actions, but this too has yet to be resolved (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 401). These cases could potentially lead to changes in the education funding scheme of the PC government.

Discussion

The Klein government took complete control of education funding for the first time in the province's history and thus there is a sense in which this may be seen as a radical move. However, this was not a new idea per se for increasing the province's role in education funding had been proposed in many forms before. The specific idea of having the provincial government take control of property levies was almost implemented through the new School Act of 1988, although this would have been only with regards to non-residential property. Seen in light of the previous discussions of equity in educational funding, the Klein changes don't seem quite so radical. Equity had been a concern right from the start of Alberta's education system, and the only way to achieve complete equality both in tax rates and per pupil grants was for the government to centralize the collection and disbursement of education taxes. While it would be too much of a stretch to say such a move was inevitable, it was the only way to bring a conclusion to the equity problem; anything short of this solution would mean the debate would have continued as before. In short, the Klein government's changes in the area of education funding did not come out-of-the-blue, but were a logical capstone to the discourse on equity in education funding that had been going on in the province at least since the early 1980s.

This trend from the early 1980s was towards greater control for the provincial government at the expense of the autonomy of local school jurisdictions. The new system of education funding imposed by the Klein government gave the province considerable influence over the level of education spending, and to some degree the focus of educational spending. It is hard to see how any future government could do more to centralize funding at the provincial level.

GOVERNANCE

As in the area of education funding, a change in the direction of the PC government's policy on education governance can also be seen around 1982. The change is most evident in the government's attitude towards the number of school jurisdictions and the appointment of school superintendents. Whereas the PC government originally supported the proliferation of school jurisdictions, it later dramatically reduced their number. And whereas the government first supported the local appointment of school superintendents, it later made the appointment of school superintendents subject to the approval of the Minister of Education. In both of these cases, the change in the government's attitude can be seen shortly after 1982. Furthermore, additional evidence for the view that power was being transferred from local jurisdictions to the Department of Education can be seen in Bill 59 (the government's first proposal for a new School Act) and as a consequence of the government's concern for compulsory provincial exams and higher standards. While this last concern was evident before 1982, it generated considerably more government action after 1982 than before, as will be detailed in Chapter 5. The point is, however, that the centralizing impetus of the PC government's education policy became evident after 1982, and this involved a direct reversal in policy direction.

Reduction in the Number of School Boards

One of the most dramatic moves in the Klein government's educational restructuring was the consolidation of school boards, reducing their number from over 140 to 68. There were good reasons for eliminating many of the school boards, some of which had very few students. However, the large number of school boards became a problem at least partly because of the PC government itself. Shortly after coming to power, the PC government had simplified the process of resident application, making school jurisdictions easier to form. As a result, many new school jurisdictions came into existence.

> The number of school jurisdictions dramatically increased over the next decade to number 160 by the end of the 1980's. The philosophical stance of the government was one of allowing smaller jurisdictions to exist in order to enhance citizen participation in education. The government felt that with greater public involvement there would result greater public commitment and a greater degree of school board accountability (Pierce 1995, 94).

Hence the large number of school jurisdictions was a problem of the PC government's own making.

However, by the early 1980s concern about this was growing. A discussion paper to guide the School Act review was released by Minister of Education Dave King in April 1984 listing the different issues that needed to be considered in the form of questions. Under the "Governance of Education" section, two of the issues listed were: "Are Albertans well served by 150 distinct school jurisdictions? Should a school jurisdiction having responsibility for 100 pupils be treated identically as one having responsibility for 80,000 pupils?" (Alberta Education 1984a, 2). Although this did not lead to a noticeable public concern about the number of jurisdictions, it was at least an issue that had come to the attention of the departmental officials involved in rewriting the School Act.

By the time of the Klein government's education roundtables in October 1993, this had become a salient issue. The Minister of Education, Halvar Jonson, had already begun to reduce the number of school boards. The roundtable workbook raised the issue and pointed to the action taken.

> Alberta presently has 147 school boards with approximately 950 trustees, of whom 200 are also county councillors. Of the 147 school boards, 142 are operating boards and 5 are non-operating (i.e., they do not operate schools but send students to nearby jurisdictions) in the remote areas of the province. On August 31, 1993, the Minister amalgamated 35 non-operating boards with nearby operating school jurisdictions. Almost half of the school boards in Alberta enroll fewer than 1000 students each (Alberta Education 1993, 31).

By reducing the number of school boards, it was claimed that money could be saved through the elimination of redundant administration. This was thus an attractive option for the government. It had cited education as a very high priority, but was still making a big cut in education funding. Clearly, it would be easier "to sell" education cuts to the public if financial savings were made by reducing the number of school trustees and administrators. Even if the potential savings were relatively small, as they were, it made good publicity for public consumption.

When the educational restructuring initiatives were announced, one aspect of it was the reducation in the number of school jurisdictions. The Department of Education business plan stated that one goal was to "Reduce the number of school boards from 141 to about 60 through amalgamation and regionalization" (Alberta Education 1994a, 9). The government claimed that this was what people wanted.

> In public discussions and consultations over the past years, Albertans told the Province that there were too many school boards. Albertans believe that reducing the number of boards would result in reduced administrative costs and increased efficiency in the education system. The number of school boards can be reduced through regionalization or amalgamation (Alberta Education 1994b, 1).

Amalgamation and regionalization are two separate processes for merging school jurisdictions.

> Amalgamations may be voluntary, but may also be imposed by the Minister. The school board is dissolved and the lands of the jurisdiction being amalgamated are added to the lands of a receiving jurisdiction. The Minister may amalgamate public jurisdictions with public jurisdictions and separate school jurisdictions with separate school jurisdictions. The jurisdiction that was amalgamated ceases to exist.
>
> Regionalizations are voluntary. The school boards of the participating jurisdictions are dissolved. The participating boards are replaced by a board for the regional division. The jurisdictions become wards of the regional division. Regionalization is reversible under current legislation. Anytime after four years, electors in any of the participating jurisdictions may petition for a plebiscite to revert back to their previous form of school governance (NOTE: If the regional division was established by the Lieutenant Govenor in Council under s.208.31 of Bill 19, a plebiscite to allow for the re-establishment of the area into its original form of governance does not apply (Alberta Education 1994b, 7).

Regionalization was voluntary in the sense that school boards could choose which boards they would like to form a regional division with, but it was involuntary in the sense that they did not have the option of remaining in their present form (Alberta Education 1994b, 8).

By March 1995 the number of operating school boards had been reduced from 141 to 68. The stated purpose was, of course, to reduce excessive administrative expenses.

> Nevertheless, it also had the effect of reducing the power of school trustees in districts that had previously been small enough that trustees were able to exert

> influence on a school-by-school basis. These trustees had earned the ire of participants both 'below' them -- principals and teachers -- and 'above' them -- provincial politicians and senior civil servants (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 388).

For either reason, or both, there are considerably fewer school jurisdictions as a result of the restructuring of the Klein government.

Discussion

It is clear that the PC government's policy in this area changed dramatically, from its initial support for the proliferation of local jurisdictions, to a desire to limit their number dramatically. During the 1970s an increase in the number of local jurisdictions was seen as a way to encourage local participation but, as it turned out, many new local jurisdictions were apparently formed to act as tax shelters. As the financial problems of the government grew, there was a discernable shift in the government's attitude towards the local jurisdictions. By the early 1980s questions were being raised about the number and role of the jurisdictions, and it was this new train of thought that led ultimately to the Klein policy of amalgamation and regionalization. The selection of Reno Bosetti as Deputy Minister in 1982 played a role in this, since, as he indicated to me, he was in favour of reducing the number of boards, especially by getting rid of the tax shelter jurisdictions. But, as in the case of education funding, the right circumstances had to be in place in order to push through the reduction in school boards, and it was the deficit fighting agenda of the Klein government that made this politically possible in 1994.

Control of School Superintendents

Before the School Act of 1970, school superintendents were appointed by the provincial government, and in this way the government maintained some control over educational services. "In the educational hierarchy, the position of superintendent was placed parallel to that of a school board. Authority was vested in the position to ensure the government's educational goals and objectives were being followed" (Pierce 1995, 93). However, the new School Act of 1970 allowed a significant change: superintendents were to be appointed by the local jurisdictions rather than the Department of Education. "Under this altered hierarchy, the superintendent was no longer in a parallel position to school trustees but rather became their employee and accountable to them" (Pierce 1995, 94). This clearly amounted to an increase in autonomy for the local jurisdictions, a reflection of the growing awareness of the professionalization of local school board administrators.

By the early 1980s, the idea of the province resuming control of superintendents was under consideration in the Department of Education. The discussion paper for the School Act review raised the issue: "Should Superintendents be appointed by the Minister?" (Alberta Education 1984a, 7). Judith Anderson, the Director of Legal Services for the ASTA, saw this as a serious threat.

> School boards in Alberta enjoy the right and privilege of selecting and employing their own chief advisor, namely the Superintendent of Schools. The move back to provincially appointed Superintendents of Schools is also under consideration. The strong support for and recommendation for locally appointed Superintendents of Schools by the Cameron Commission on Education, a Royal Commission of the Alberta Government, has been forgotten (Anderson 1984, 4).

However, the government did not move in this direction with the School Act of 1988.

Part of the Klein government's restructuring in education involved restoring a much stronger role for the province in the selection of superintendents. The business plan called for the "Joint selection of superintendents" which meant that the school boards would "work with the province in the selection of school superintendents" (Alberta Education 1994a, 4, 19). "Joint selection" turned out to mean that the Minister of Education had an absolute veto over the selection of superintendents. Section 94(1) of the amended School Act reads: "Subject to the regulations, a board shall appoint an individual superintendent of schools for a period of not more than 3 years with the prior approval in writing of the Minister." In this way, power was transferred from the school boards back to the provincial government.

As Masson notes, it is quite common for school board trustees to defer to the advice of their professional administrators. This means that those administrators are quite influential in the direction of school board policy (Masson 1994, 445-446). Thus the selection of the top administrator, the superintendent, is not inconsequential. By taking an active role in the selection of superintendents once again, the government enhanced its control of educational decision-making at the expense of the local jurisdictions.

Bill 59 (1987) And The Centralizing Thrust of Government Policy

During the process of developing a new School Act in the 1980s, the government's first proposed new act was Bill 59. Many trustees saw this bill as advocating a transfer of power from the school boards to the Minister of Education. In particular, Bill 59 would have dramatically increased the number of matters that were dealt with by ministerial regulations. The trustees saw this as giving the Minister too much discretion. In defence of the large-scale use of regulations, Education Minister Nancy Betkowski claimed that the increase in regulatory powers would benefit the boards by allowing for more flexibility: "In developing the new Act, it was decided that administrative matters should be handled in regulations so that *there would be more flexibility*" (Betkowski 1988, 3). She then suggested that the school boards perhaps didn't want flexibility, since they were the ones opposing this move.

Bill 59 received widespread opposition from a variety of groups: private school supporters who saw it as not granting them enough rights, Catholic school supporters who saw elements of the Bill to be hostile to separate schools, and many public school boards, including eight city boards that together presented a brief to the government opposing the Bill. Every major "stakeholder" group opposed the Bill (Ingram and Byfield 1988, 26). The Edmonton Public School Board even took out ads in newspapers attacking Bill 59 (Duncan 1988, 21).

Due to the heavy opposition, Bill 59 was replaced by Bill 27, which was passed by the government. The number of ministerial regulations was reduced from 106 in Bill 59, to 31. This, as well as other changes, were well received by trustees. In contrast to Bill 59's centralizing tendencies, many trustees believed "that in the new bill, the government has reaffirmed the autonomy and decision-making powers of local boards" (Tost 1988, 23).

In the first effort to change the School Act since 1970, the government presented a bill that was perceived by many school boards as transferring power from the boards to the Minister. in this case, the boards were able to force the government to back down, although they were helped by the fact that other groups also opposed the bill for other reasons. Nevertheless, the direction favoured by the government was clear and would re-emerge in a few years. It would take a virtual crisis situation to enable the government to enhance its power at the expense of the boards.

Provincial Standards and Education Governance

Aside from the transfer of power from school boards to the provincial government that resulted from deliberate changes in governance such as the power to tax and the appointment of superintendents, other aspects of the government's education agenda have an impact on this. Through changes in curriculum and school programs, such as the Secondary Education Review (all of which are discussed in Chapter 5), the content of basic education was increasingly determined by the Department of Education rather than the local school jurisdictions. Even the emphasis on examinations that the PC government adopted by the early 1980s contributed to this.

> The reinstatement of the provincial examinations in the 1983-84 school year can be construed as a major change in relationship between school boards and the provincial government. The provincial examinations pressure the jurisdictions into developing an educational system which can produce students capable of passing the examinations. If boards fail to do so, they are easily identified with the analysis of the jurisdictions examination results. Thus, boards are faced with the task of

> structuring their educational programs to accomodate the provincially established examinations (Hanson 1985, 35).

Thus a number of trends in the PCs' education policy since the early 1980s have contributed to an erosion of local jurisdictional autonomy, with the Department of Education accumulating the power lost by those boards.

This pattern was already noted in 1981 in a study by Milton March. He surveyed school superintendents and directors of education in the four western provinces to uncover their perceptions about control over educational decisions at five levels, namely, education departments, school boards, superintendents, principals and teachers. For Alberta, he concluded that "The overall picture was of a perceived or expected increase in the degree of control by the Education Department over quite a range of items of an educational nature" (1981, 144). While in the three other provinces there had been a decrease in control at the provincial level, this was not the case with Alberta.

> Alberta appeared to differ from the other provinces with respect to the number of items where the Department was either perceived to have increased its control or predicted to do so. Several of these items were of an educational nature and related to such matters as school programs and procedures for awarding grades, assessing students, reporting student progress or evaluating instruction (March 1981, 155-156).

In sum then, "in Alberta, the education department was perceived to have increased its degree of control over more items than in any of the other provinces" (March 1981, 191). This provides further evidence that there was a trend towards the centralization of power in the provincial government by the early 1980s, well before Bill 59.

School Councils

In contrast to the governance issues discussed above which transfer power from school boards to the government, the creation of school councils effectively transferred power from the school board level to the individual schools. The government wanted to enable parents to be more active in influencing the schools their children attended, and empowering school councils was one way of achieving that. After the school council provision of the School Act had been strengthened, a three-member MLA committee travelled the province to obtain public input into how large a role school councils should play. Then the school council provision of the School Act was amended again, withdrawing some of the power granted in 1994. School councils were, however, a major feature of the Klein government's restructuring efforts in education.

As mentioned previously, school councils were originally proposed in Alberta by the Worth Report. The Worth Commission wanted to encourage community involvement in schools, and school councils were seen as an appropriate vehicle to achieve that. In our interview, former education minister Dave King said that the school council idea was first implemented in the Northland School Division Act of 1983. The Northland School Division covers a vast sparsely populated territory, and the schools are usually a great distance from each other. In order for the schools to meet community needs, each school was to have a "local school board committee," which is basically a school council. Its members were elected by the community at large for three year terms, and the committee members would select a chairman. The chairmen of each committee automatically became the school trustees of the Northland School Division, and had the power of any other school board. The local school board committees were empowered to recommend various options to the divisional school board (such as who should be hired as teachers, selection of the principal, holidays, etc.), but the latter had the actual decision-making authority (Northland School Division Act, 1983). In effect, then, the local school board committee functioned as a school council, and so school councils had some legislative existence in Alberta by 1983.

The idea of establishing school councils also appealed to people outside the Northland School Division. In 1984 a Policy Advisory Committee for the School Act Review, comprised of government MLAs, was set up to receive submissions and compile recommendations for the government in rewriting the School Act. The Committee's proposals included legislative provision for school councils.

> The School Act should require the creation of School Councils or Advisory Committees in which the School Principal would be a key participant. While these would not be autonomous bodies, their authority in influencing board decisions will determine the extent of community spirit (Alberta Education 1985a, 44).

The first draft of the new School Act in 1987, Bill 59, did indeed have a provision for school councils, but the councils were relatively powerless. The following year Bill 27 was introduced and passed to become the School Act, 1988. The school council provisions of this Bill were more favourable to parental input, and allowed each school board a greater role in determining the function of the councils (Byfield 1988, 51).

Section 17(1) of the School Act, 1988 states "Parents of students attending a school may establish a school council for that school." A majority of the council members had to be parents of children attending the school, and the council was given the following powers:

> (3) A school council may
> (a) advise the principal of the school and the board respecting any matter relating to the school, and
> (b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation.

Thus the formation of school councils was optional for the parents of each school, and aside from the advice a council could give, it had no powers aside from what the school board specifically delegated to it.

In 1990 the Department of Education carried out a study of the impact of the school council provisions of the new School Act. A representative sample of schools from across the province was selected to investigate whether school councils had actually been formed, what their role was, what problems they encountered, what rules had been established by school boards, and what the relationship between the councils and the boards was. A number of school councils had, in fact, been formed as a result of the

Act, but there were also a large number of groups that existed prior to the Act that reorganized themselves to fit the terms of the Act, or were already within the terms of the Act. The most common functions of the school councils were things like fund-raising and helping with school events, but it was anticipated that the role of councils in the life of the schools would expand. The biggest problem the councils encountered was communicating with the various groups (parents, staff, school boards, etc.) that had a stake in the school. Parent apathy was another important problem. Rules established by the various school boards were rather diverse, but the relationships between school boards and school councils was mostly positive (Alberta Education 1991a, 22-23).

It was the intention of the government that school councils would be formed and play a role in the life of the schools. Jim Dinning, the last Minister of Education before Ralph Klein became Premier, spoke on his vision for Alberta's education system to the convention of Alberta's school trustees in 1990. Among his comments were the following: "All schools will welcome parents to be fully involved in their children's education. Every school will have an active and purposeful school council" (Dinning 1990, 6-7). However, under the School Act 1988, not every school did have "an active and purposeful school council." Klein's restructuring program would attempt to change that.

In the fall of 1993 the government held a series of roundtables on education in Alberta to help generate public input into the proposed restructuring. The roundtable workbook, Meeting The Challenge, included a discussion of school councils. It seemed to suggest that school councils had not fulfilled expectations, and thus the legislation would have to be changed to give them more power.

> The School Act now provides for school councils to be formed at each school so that parents can play a broad role in advising the school and the school board on any matters related to the school. To date, the roles of most school councils have been somewhat limited to fund-raising activities, finding parent volunteers to assist in the school, or providing supervision at social events. Parents are now requesting a greater role than before in decisions made about the education of their children.

> The present legislation allows school boards to delegate authority to school councils in a number of areas but to a large extent this has not happened. Legislation would have to be changed to ensure greater involvement occurs in more significant areas (Alberta Education 1993a, 35).

The document then goes on to specify which areas the school councils could be more active in (Alberta Education 1993a, 35-36).

Indeed, the School Amendment Act of 1994 (Bill 19), the enabling legislation for the Klein government's restructuring of education, did much to strengthen the role of school councils. Whereas the previous legislation stated that parents "may" establish a school council, the new wording of 17(1) was as follows: "A school council shall be established in accordance with the regulations for each school operated by a board." As well, some of the school council's duties were now made mandatory. The new section 17(4) said,

> A school council shall
> (a) advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school,
> (b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation,
> (c) ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister,
> (d) ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the board and the superintendent, and
> (e) do anything it is required to do under the regulations.

Furthermore, section 17(5) gave the council the option of also making policies related to school programs, the expenditure of money, the educational standards required of the students, and the management of the schools. According to Bruce and Schwartz, this meant that the powers and responsibilities of school councils conflicted with those of the school principals. "Both the school council, in 17(4)(c), and the principal, explicitly in 15(c.1) and implicitly in other subsections, were given equivalent educational responsibilities; there were similar potential overlaps with respect to financial matters" (1997, 405).

In conjunction with the new legislation, a committee of three PC MLAs was set up to hold hearings and draft a proposal for regulations governing school councils, as well as generally deal with "the changing roles and responsibilities of boards, principals, and school councils" (Jenkinson 1994a, 29). This group was called the Implementation Team on Roles and Responsibilities in Education. During the hearings, the ATA and ASBA made submissions requesting that the government not give too much authority to school councils. Some parent groups agreed with this view, arguing that the councils should have a strictly advisory role. However, other parent groups wanted the councils to have much more power (Jenkinson 1994b, 30-31).

The Committee's report was issued in December 1994. The Committee was not opposed to active and powerful school councils, but wanted the councils to have the choice as to how much they would do. As well, it was concerned that the councils might be taken over by special interest groups.

> School councils will take on different functions in different communities, ranging from a minimal level of involvement to active involvement in shared and collaborative decision making to formulate policies, shape direction, and define goals of the school. The actual role and responsibilities of such a continuum of school councils will be determined by the council, after it has been elected democratically. The school council's role (and its composition) depends on the size and location of the school, and the type of school jurisdiction involved. Each school must have a school council, and the majority of members of a school council must be parents of students enrolled in the school. It is important that the school council be representative and democratic; in other words, responsive to the majority of parents and community members who have a relationship with the school (Alberta Education 1994c, 17).

Fundamentally, "The school council's role is to work with and provide advice to the school principal and sometimes to the school board" (Alberta Education 1994c, 17). This being said, the report goes on to list a large number of activities in the areas of Planning, Developing and Delivering Programs, Budgeting and Allocating Resources, and Communications and Community Relations that a school council "can" be involved in "at its own discretion" (Alberta Education 1994c, 18-19). Thus provision was made for those school councils which want to be deeply involved in the management of their schools, but councils which did not want to be so active could leave those responsibilities for the principal.

The Committee report displeased both the Alberta School Boards Association and ATA on the one hand, and people who wanted much stronger school councils on the other. Both of the former groups again expressed concern about school councils being taken over by special interest groups. However, John Ballheim, president of the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, expressed the view that each of the schools should be run independently, with school boards being abolished altogether, thereby advocating the greatest degree of school council control possible (Jenkinson 1994e, 42-43).

In order to reflect the view of the report that the degree of responsibility exercised by a council should be decided by the council itself, the School Act was again amended in 1995. Whereas section 17(4) of the 1994 amendments said "A school council shall," the 1995 change made 17(4) say "A school council may, at its discretion," and the following list of activities had its wording changed to reflect a lessening of school council responsibilities. As well, section 17(5) was changed to reduce the scope of the school council's authority. And to top it off, subsection (7.1) was added, requiring school boards to develop a process to resolve disputes between school councils and principals.

With the 1995 amendments, school councils were once again advisory bodies, with the option of taking on more responsibility. "But the attention generated by the original provisions of Bill 19 and the Implementation Team reports will make them important parts of education in Alberta for the foreseeable future" (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 406).

Discussion

School councils were clearly an important part of the Klein government's efforts at restructuring education, but the idea of school councils had originally been implemented to some degree by 1983. The government of Peter Lougheed legislated school councils for the Northland School Division, and also recommended school councils for the new

School Act. That new Act was not completed until Don Getty had taken over as Premier, but it did, in fact, contain a provision for school councils. The Klein government simply tried to strengthen the school council provisions, although it wasn't entirely successful. Once again, this issue shows clear continuity from the Lougheed period to the Klein period.

CONCLUSION

While the Klein educational restructuring initiatives clearly had a significant impact on educational governance by transferring power away from the school boards, downwards to school councils and upwards to the Department of Education, the ideas for these changes were anything but novel. School councils received their initial boost while Dave King was Minister, as did the centralizing education finance plan of the MFP. While a more decentralizing impetus was definitely at work during the PC's first term in power (with superintendents being chosen at the local level and rules for establishing new districts being eased), that impetus did not survive past 1982. It played itself out with other related issues such as opposition to compulsory provincial exams. Again, the trends that came to fruition in education under Klein were rooted in PC educational thinking that became clearly evident shortly after 1982. That particular year, 1982, saw the beginning of financial problems for the government and the selection of a very determined visionary as Deputy Minister. Both of these events had important consequences for the future direction of education policy in Alberta. With regards to policy on governance and funding, 1982 was a pivotal year, dividing the early focus of the PC government from the direction it would move throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s.

CHAPTER 5

STANDARDS, TESTING, AND CURRICULUM

One broad category of educational concern deals with what students actually do in the classroom -- what they are studying, what they are learning, and how their progress can be measured. The issues of what is being learned, and the measurement of what is being learned, are closely related. At the time the PCs came to power, educational thought in Alberta (and the rest of the country) placed less emphasis on content and testing than had been the case previously. In particular, compulsory provincial exams were seen to be outdated and unfair. The momentum in Alberta's education system was moving in the direction of having them abolished. The Social Credit government was slowly decreasing the role of the exams, and then the PCs eliminated them early in their first term. Alberta was the last Canadian province to do so.

However, within a short time there seemed to be a reaction against this move. Many people believed that children weren't learning as much, with the absence of the tests playing a role in this by removing an objective benchmark of achievement. By the late seventies there was much pressure on the government to "shore-up" educational standards and reinstate compulsory provincial exams. With Dave King becoming Education Minister in 1979, this perspective received greater attention in the educational priorities of the Alberta government. Increasing educational standards and measuring student progress through exams became a pillar of PC education policy. Premier Lougheed was himself very supportive of these initiatives. This perspective continued to play a role in PC educational thinking, receiving new impetus with Education Minister Jim Dinning during Getty's administration, and remained prominent under the Klein administration, notably in the Department of Education business plan.

ABOLITION AND REINSTATEMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL EXAMS

One of the most controversial educational issues of the 1970s and early 1980s had to do with compulsory provincial exams for grade 12 students, commonly called "departmentals." By the late 1960s or early 1970s the weight of opinion among the educational elite was that those exams should be abolished. They were ultimately abolished in 1973, but shortly thereafter complaints arose that the abolition of the exams had led to a deterioration in the quality of education provided in Alberta schools. Those complaints struck a chord in the government, and the departmentals were reinstated in 1983.

From 1906 to 1973 grade 12 students in Alberta wrote compulsory provincial examinations in a number of subjects. Their achievement on those exams was then certified by the Minister of Education (Tymko 1979, 104). They were supervised by the High School and University Matriculation Examinations Board (Alberta Education 1976, 4). "A system of monitoring education in schools was deemed necessary to make certain that standards in education were maintained and that inconsistencies across school systems regarding student achievement evaluations were avoided, thus supposedly enhancing public conficence in the local schools" (Dumont 1977, 6). However, resistance to these exams increasingly developed.

> Over the course of years many educators, students, parents, and others have protested the use of provincially developed, set, and scored examinations. This sentiment grew appreciably during the 1960s and 70s. Major arguments against the examinations included concerns about their restrictive effect on curricula, their inability to deal fairly with all parts of a course adopted for local needs, their misuse by some jurisdictions to judge teacher performance, and the inadequacy and psychological burden of a one-shot total and final evaluation. Increased qualifications and experience of the teaching force justified a shift to summary evaluations by the teachers (Alberta Education 1976, 7).

In accordance with a recommendation from the High School and University Matriculation Examinations Board, in 1969 the Minister of Education decided that students' final marks in English 30 and Biology 30 would be determined differently:

rather than being 100 per cent determined by the departmental exams, the departmentals would comprise 75 per cent of the final mark with the other 25 per cent to be the teacher's mark. In June 1971 this was changed so that the teacher's component would be 50 per cent for these subjects. Then in December of that year it was decided that the departmentals would account for only 50 per cent of the final mark for all subjects, not just English 30 and Biology 30 (Tymko 1979, 106-107, 116, 120).

The ongoing debate about the role of the departmental exams came to a head early in 1973. Edmonton high school students who wrote the exams in December 1972 found in January 1973 that their marks on the exams were considerably lower than their classroom marks. Many students, parents, teachers and principals were upset by this and the controversy embarrassed the Department of Education. As a result, the departmentals were abolished (although they could still be voluntarily taken by students appealing course marks) and all high schools were "accredited." ("Accreditation" refers to the authority to set students' final marks). As well, in February the High School and University Matriculation Examinations Board was disbanded (Tymko 1979, 125-131, 136, 142). Interestingly, "Alberta was the last province to drop mandatory senior high school provincial examinations" (Alberta Education 1976, 10).

By 1975 public concerns about the loss of provincial standards (as represented by the departmentals) had already arisen. In fact, before the end of that year the question of reintroducing compulsory exams had been discussed in the Department of Education. Concerns were fueled by the fact that grade 12 school marks had increased noticeably after abolition of the exams (Tymko 1979, 149, 151, 153).

Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement

By early 1976 the concern about the decline in standards had reached the floor of the Legislature. On March 30 Tory MLA Ron Tesolin introduced the following motion:

> Be it resolved that the provincial government be requested to consider the effect of the non-compulsory nature of Grade 12 departmental examinations on the quality of education in Alberta today (Alberta Hansard 1976, 460-461).

In introducing this motion Tesolin referred to the fact that many people had become concerned about the standard of education that students were receiving and were demanding "a return to basics" (Alberta Hansard 1976, 461). Public debates about student achievement and evaluation "occurred more and more frequently" but little reliable information was available. "In the midst of all this controversy Hon. Julian Koziak, Minister of Education, established the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement (MACOSA) in October 1976 and commissioned it with the task of studying the problems surrounding this issue and making recommendations for their solution" (MACOSA 1979, 2). Later that month Tesolin's motion was again discussed in the Legislature and passed. In speaking in favour of the motion Koziak said:

> We are at a time in education, Mr. Speaker, when people are questioning the abilities and achievements of students who are in the system and who complete the system. We see that quite readily by the remarks made in the media. The remarks would seem to challenge the abilities and achievements of students today as opposed to students of yesteryear (Alberta Hansard 1976, 1562).

Furthermore, Koziak said that by passing that motion MACOSA would be given the task to study the impact of the abolition of the departmentals (Alberta Hansard 1976, 1563).

The study commissioned by MACOSA to fulfill this task was completed early in October, 1977. This study, the Alberta Grade 12 Examination Study, discussed current student evaluation policies across the province, the trend of grade inflation in the post-departmental period, and the perceptions of the "stakeholder publics" about the quality of education (Dumont 1977, ii). The stakeholder publics were divided into the categories of "educationist," people from the professional educational community, and "non-educationists," namely, all other people. The educationists had a relatively positive view of student achievement and did not support the reintroduction of compulsory provincial exams. However, non-educationists believed that student achievement had declined and that compulsory provincial exams should be reintroduced (Dumont 1977, ix-xii).

There was, then, a perception among many people that the level of education was declining. However, there was not any empirical data available with which to prove anything about the level of achievement. The study pointed out: "IF 'quality of education' means the amount that students know, or their abilities to reason or create, then the Study concludes from available data that the question [about whether there had been a decline in quality] cannot be answered. No data exists upon which a valid comparison can be made" (Dumont 1977, xi). However, the MACOSA believed nevertheless that public perception was still important. It was willing to accept that

> the Study provides evidence of a loss of public confidence in the educational system over the past few years, and that there is likely some basis for this loss. The impact of public confidence upon education cannot be ignored. Because of the perceived decline in actual achievement as opposed to the rise in marks, because of the general decline in public confidence in the educational system, and because there is always room for improvement of educational practices, the Committee believes that steps must be taken to improve the quality of education and particularly the procedures for evaluation (Dumont 1977, xiii).

However, the Committee did not recommend a reintroduction of compulsory exams at that point (Dumont 1977, xiii-xiv).

In 1979 the Committee released its final report. It continued to oppose compulsory provincial exams. Recommendation 11 stated "THAT mandatory grade 12 departmental examinations for the purpose of awarding final marks not be reinstituted" (MACOSA 1979, 70). It also noted,

> The argument against reinstitution of mandatory departmental examinations in their historical form is based on two main contentions: first, that these examinations have not provided their usually assumed standard of evaluation; and second, that teacher-assigned marks provide as good or better predictions of later academic success in post-secondary studies than do marks from common examinations (MACOSA 1979, 71).

Thus a committee established to deal with public concerns about student achievement due to the removal of the departmentals did not recommend that they be reintroduced.

After the release of the MACOSA report the government encouraged feedback from the public and stakeholder groups. Eight days of public meetings were held, and submissions were received from 74 individuals and 60 groups. As well, a poll was conducted to survey the views of the general population (Mowat 1980, 1-2). Generally, it was concluded that there was reasonably strong support for a greater provincial role in setting educational standards and monitoring students to see that those standards were met. There was strong support for a provincial testing program to measure achievement. Furthermore, "Public opinion will support action by the provincial Department of Education to use a portion of the testing program to ascertain that students who wish to receive a high school diploma have acquired at least minimally acceptable levels of competence in specified areas of achievement" (Mowat 1980, 42-43).

Reinstatement of Provincial Exams

In light of this, the Student Evaluation Branch of Alberta Education was established in November 1980, and a new student evaluation program was announced. "Instead of mandatory Grade 12 examinations, Alberta Education proposed a system of provincially set and marked comprehensive examinations for Grade 12 students. These comprehensives, which were to be written on an optional basis, were designed to certify the achievement of above-average students graduating from high school" (Symyrozum and Hrabi 1984, 26). This upset two groups of people: the ATA, which feared that student performance on the exams would be used as a standard to rate teachers, and advocates of universal compulsory tests. The ATA went so far as to recommend that its members not prepare students for the exams and that students not write them (McCarthy and Jenish 1983, 46). Apparently, few people were satisfied with this solution.

In order to solve this problem, the government decided in 1983 to reinstate compulsory provincial exams for grade 12 students. On May 31 Education Minister Dave King announced in the Legislature:

> Mr Speaker, as Minister of Education, I would like to announce that beginning in September 1983, all grade 12 students in Alberta will be required to write provincial examinations in order to receive a high school diploma.
> These examinations will be course specific and will count for one-half of each student's graduation marks. The final course marks will be a fifty-fifty weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark (Alberta Hansard 1983, 1243).

King mentioned that public discussion about an Alberta Education paper on the issue "showed overwhelming support for the implementation of these provincial examinations" (Alberta Hansard 1983, 1243-1244).

At the time the PCs came to power there was a strong consensus among members of the education elite that the compulsory departmental exams should be abolished. There was momentum in this direction, and the new PC Minister of Education was swept up by it and did, in fact, abolish them. However, it wasn't long before public concerns about the loss of the departmentals, and the perceived negative affects that resulted, led the government to begin studying the question again. After a few years, as evidence of public support for compulsory provincial exams kept growing, the government decided to reinstate them. It should be noted, though, as Dave King said in his interview, that public support for the exams was anecdotal.

THE GOALS OF EDUCATION AND THE HARDER REPORT

By the early 1970s curriculum committees within the department of Education were trying to draw up revised goals for Alberta's education system. After being appointed Minister of Education in 1975, Julian Koziak wanted to reform the process of curriculum policy making in Alberta. The restructuring of that process led him to create the Curriculum Policies Board in September, 1976. The CPB was to have 16 members, 8 of whom were professional educators, and 8 of whom were not. "The purpose of the Board was to recommend policies to the Minister of Education related to curriculum procedures and programming for Grades 1-12 in Alberta. One of the specific policy areas for which the Board was to be responsible was recommendations concerning the goals of education for children in Grades 1-12" (Fennell 1985, 83).

In order to stimulate discussion about the goals of education, the Department of Education released a discussion paper entitled Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements by Dr. J. Harder. Harder noted that his paper was "a response to requests for changes in our education programs from many segments of our society. In the main, these requests stem from the general dissatisfaction of the public with what they feel are short falls in the education system and the high costs of what they term mediocrity" (1977, v). He believed that changes to Alberta's education system since 1972 had "left the general public with the feeling that standards have been lowered and that student competencies are deteriorating" (1977, 1). In summary form, his report suggested the following:

> (1) that curriculum writers be more specific in spelling out content and that such content be carefully sequenced through the years of schooling,
> (2) that certain areas of a student's education for future well-being be made mandatory with adequate time provided,
> (3) that the amount of time for free choice options be reduced,
> (4) that the objectives of education be confined to what the school can do (1977, vi).

The last point refers to an influential assertion by Harder that there is a distinction between the goals of education and the goals of schooling. Education, in his view, entailed the life-long learning process that each individual experiences and that occurs in many contexts such as family, church, community, etc. Schooling, on the other hand, was simply the learning activities that were formally conducted in the institutions called schools. In this sense schooling is just one part of a broader process we call education (Harder 1977, 6).

In the summer of 1978, the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education published a collection of articles critiquing the Harder Report entitled Curriculum Policy Making in Alberta Education. In one article, Leonard Beck wrote that

> The Harder Report is chiefly a political gesture. It makes no serious attempt to

> identify educational or management problems because solving such problems is not its purpose. Its purpose is to defend against continued public criticism of the schools. The proposed restructuring of secondary education is its means to that end (1978, 36).

In particular, Beck said that Harder was proposing "a scheme that will restore control of the content and effectiveness of the secondary school program to Alberta Education" (1978, 17). What this means is that curriculum control would be centralized in the Department of Education, a point echoed by Jack Quarter: "What the Harder Report will accomplish is to give official sanction to a more practical educational climate that will allow for centralized control of curriculum development and of costs. The number of course options will be reduced and more centralized monitoring of performance will be emphasized" (1978, 99-100). Quarter also argued that Harder's perspective was that of the "Back-to-the-Basics" movement (1978, 75-76). This is similar to Kas Mazurek's argument that the "basic life skills" that Harder emphasizes "really translate into the three R's" (1978, 145). He did not see this as a good thing. The perspective of many of the articles could probably be said to be summarized in the quip from Al McKay that "the flaws in the Harder recommendations are so great that the propositions contained in the Report should be rejected out of hand" (1978, 237).

The Department of Education did a more comprehensive survey of public reaction to the Harder Report, but although public reaction generally was not as critical as the above mentioned responses, there was not clear support for it. The overall reaction was basically ambiguous. As a result, the report on public response concluded that the most valuable result of the Harder Report "was the opportunity provided to examine the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Alberta's educational system" (Earl 1979, 13).

The Curriculum Policies Board put together a proposed statement of the "Goals of Basic Education for Alberta" which was publicly released by the Education Minister in October 1977. The media portrayed it as reflecting a "back to the basics" perspective. The proposed goals made a clear distinction between the goals of schooling and the goals of education as Harder had suggested. In April 1978 the Minister tabled a document of the same title in the Legislature. It was essentially the same as the one released previously. The following month he made a motion to adopt the statement, and on May 15 the Legislature approved the motion (Fennell 1985, 93-97).

THE ALBERTA HERITAGE LEARNING RESOURCES PROJECT

One specific aspect of curriculum development that is notable is the Alberta Heritage Learning Resources Project. In 1978 the government allocated 8.3 million dollars for the creation of curricular materials that would focus especially on the province and the country to increase Canadian content. What makes this particularly interesting is that these materials were developed outside the normal curriculum development channels.

Premier Lougheed was strongly committed to increasing the amount taught about Alberta and Canada in Alberta's social studies classes. The Heritage Learning Resources Project was created largely to help fulfill this purpose. As Lougheed himself said in the Legislature, he wanted to strongly reinforce "the continued commitment of this government to a greater emphasis in its education curriculum upon geography and history of our own people in Alberta and Canada" (Alberta Hansard 1979, 727). He cited the Project as an aspect of how the government was achieving that goal. An Alberta Education promotional ad for the Project described it this way: "This ambitious learning resources project, directed by Alberta Education, will provide a wealth of written, audio-visual, film and graphic educational materials. They will relate directly to the history, geography and social and natural environment of our Province and Country" (Alberta Education 1979, B6). The 1979 Speech from the Throne also emphasized this point by describing the Project as "making a significant and increasing contribution to Canadian content material available for Alberta students" (Alberta Hansard 1979, 3).

Rather than develop the Project materials through the curriculum development process that was already in place, the government created a steering committee to oversee the entire Project, with *ad hoc* committees dealing with each of the specific aspects, such as the literature books, atlases, or social studies kits. For NDP leader Grant Notley, this raised questions about bias in the materials. He discussed this in the Legislature.

> Obviously in any of these areas that involve such things as Canadian content and interpretation of history, it's rather important that we make sure there is a good balance in whichever committee is doing the work in developing the guidelines (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1560).

More pointedly, he said, "Quite frankly, we're talking about a lot of subjective things here, not objective things. Flora and fauna can be fairly objective, but getting into Alberta history is a very subjective question" (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1561). His reason for raising these matters was to get information from the Minister of Education: "Really, what I'd like to have the minister explain to the members . . . is the process of deciding who will take part in each *ad hoc* committee . . . " And "who is responsible for choosing the steering committee?" (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1561). Julian Koziak responded that "members of the steering committee are appointed by me on recommendation from department officials. . . . The *ad hoc* committees are strictly appointments at the departmental level" (Alberta Hansard 1978, 1561).

This information is important for two reasons. First, Krawchenko believes that this amounts to "the unabashed exercise of direct political control by the Minister" in the area of curriculum development (1984, 40). In other words, the curriculum was being influenced by the political agenda of the government. Secondly, even if her view is rejected as being rather polemical, it is still clear that the Heritage Learning Resources Project was an unusual innovation. Its materials were developed completely differently from the way curriculum was normally developed in Alberta. Curriculum was normally developed by committees under the authority of the Curriculum Branch of Alberta Education, and reviewed by the Curriculum Policies Board (Alberta Education 1977, 3, 5-8). Clearly, the government was breaking new ground in education policy, in this case by circumventing the usual channels to develop curriculum.

WHITE PAPER ON INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENCE STRATEGY

In the early 1980s Canada experienced an economic recession, as did many other Western countries. As a result, the federal government set up the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada in November 1982. The recession also hit Alberta hard. It was during this time that the province's "oil boom" faltered and rapid economic growth could no longer be taken for granted. This led the Alberta government to reassess the province's economic future.

In the fall of 1983 the Alberta government made a submission to the Royal Commission entitled Alberta in Canada: Strength in Diversity. This document had four major themes. The first, and "overriding theme," was "the paramount role of the private sector in maximizing economic opportunities and promoting economic growth" (Government of Alberta 1983, 74). The second theme was the need to restore cooperative federalism, with the provinces playing an important role in the development of economic policy. The third theme emphasized Canada's role as a trading nation and the need to become more competitive in global markets. The final theme was that Canada's economic development should be based on the country's "natural resource strengths and human talents" (Government of Alberta 1983, 75-76). The document also contained a number of specific recommendations one of which, significantly, related to education.

> Education and job retraining programmes will have to be designed to keep pace with the expected rapid technological developments of the future. Major changes in mandatory core content in our basic educational system may be required. Educational goals and activities must be coordinated with other public and private agencies to ensure systematic development through communication and application of knowledge and innovation (Government of Alberta 1983, 70-71).

In this way, the Alberta government was indicating its view that education was related to future economic success. Through "major changes in mandatory core content" (i.e., curriculum), students would be better prepared for the job market and be able to make important contributions to the economy.

Around the same time that the submission was presented to the Royal Commission, Premier Lougheed discussed the government's intention to reassess Alberta's economic strategy in the Legislature. He said the government had seen a need for such a reassessment due to market changes and technological developments. He noted that the government had already begun the reassessment and would be consulting a number of groups about this over the winter, with a statement on economic strategy to be released in the spring of 1984 (Alberta Hansard 1983, 1369). Here, again, there was an emphasis on the need to emphasize trade and the role of education in making Alberta more competitive in global markets. As Lougheed put it,

> I believe the long-term future of Canada, and Alberta in particular, is a future that will involve our being competitive in the world market place. Our educational process, our whole attitude, must be related to Alberta and Canada competing in that world market place (Alberta Hansard 1983, 1370).

He mentioned further that one of his government's priorities was "to improve the quality of our educational skills, our capacity to compete in the world market place" (Alberta Hansard 1983, 1370). Clearly Lougheed believed that there was a connection between what was taught in schools and the province's future success in international trade.

This perspective was reflected in the White Paper: Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985 to 1990 released by the government in July 1984. It called for considerable government intervention in the economy to help diversify Alberta's economy so as to leave the province less dependent on unprocessed resources. Education was to play an important role in the overall strategy. The White Paper listed five specific "economic goals and objectives for Albertans" and goal number four concerned education: "To continue to upgrade the skills of our citizens to create higher productivity, higher job marketability and greater job satisfaction that flow from such higher skill levels" (Government of Alberta 1984, 53). More specifically, under a section entitled "New Directions for Education by 1990" the following was said:

> The mandatory program of studies in our education system should teach students about Alberta's economy, by instruction and by example. Considerations should include the model of the market economy and its application to Alberta . . . Education should foster ideas of risk taking, innovation and the pursuit of excellence.
>
> Alberta's educational system should coordinate its policies and curriculum in conjunction with the 1985-1990 Industrial Strategy objectives particularly in international marketing. The study of foreign languages, particularly those of the Pacific Rim countries, should be enhanced and promoted in the primary education system (Government of Alberta 1984, 67).

Clearly, then, changes to the education system were being proposed in order to enhance its contribution to Alberta's future economic development.

The White Paper's discussion of education drew criticism, especially the apparent proposal to teach students about free enterprise. In Calgary, some education officials saw this proposal as amounting to the "political indoctrination of students." Public school trustee Jon Havelock (later a cabinet minister under Ralph Klein), said, "They're asking us to produce individuals who believe in the free enterprise system." He added, "I'm surprised that the government is taking a stance that would use public education to further its ideologies" (in Bryden 1984a, B1). When confronted with this kind of accusation, Education Minister Dave King defended the government's intention to teach children free enterprise economics. In his words, "I am quite prepared to indoctrinate them in the virtues of free enterprise because I think that system has served our community well" (in Bryden 1984b, B7). The students were not only to be provided the skills necessary to succeed in a global marketplace, they were also to be taught the functions and benefits of the free enterprise system.

The White Paper also received criticism from other directions. In spite of the plan to teach students free enterprise, ironically, many free enterprise supporters saw the White

Paper as proposing a more socialistic economy for Alberta. Some critics pointed out the inconsistency. "For instance, there are several lengthy passages in which the virtues of the market-oriented approach are stressed and the shortcomings of the alternative interventionist strategy all but ridiculed." Yet the White Paper itself ultimately proposes considerable interventionism (Watson 1984, 3). Due to the interventionism supported by the document, another critic made the following comment regarding the plan to teach children about free enterprise: "The reasoning throughout the rest of the document constitutes strong evidence that instruction about the model of the market economy would not be wasted on the authors of the White Paper themselves" (West 1984, 113).

THE SECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW

In February 1984 Dave King announced the government's plan to conduct a major review of the province's secondary education programs. A Minister's Advisory Committee was set up to oversee the first part of the review, and was to be aided by a Project Team from the Department of Education. The Advisory Committee was chaired by PC MLA Halvar Jonson (later a cabinet minister under Premier Klein) and also consisted of seven other people, one being from the Northwest Territories (which uses Alberta's curriculum) and the others having been chosen with the announced intent to have representation from a broad spectrum of Albertans. The main purpose of the Committee and Project Team was to conduct public consultation to solicit and compile the views of Albertans on the secondary education program, and on the basis of these views to make recommendations to the Minister. According to Dave King, this was the first time that Albertans were given the opportunity to become involved in a policy development process of this kind (Bosetti 1986, 53, 67-68).

Public participation took four forms. First, a questionnaire was sent to 856,000 households in the province. It consisted of an information brochure and an opinion survey. Close to 10,000 responses were received from this, with most of the adult respondents being teachers and parents. Secondly, 3000 grade 10 and 12 students from across the province were asked to rate 82 educational objectives on their relative importance, the same items used in a previous survey eleven years before, in order to make comparisons. Third, a Gallup poll was conducted of close to 1000 Albertans on issues of secondary education. And finally, almost 200 briefs were received, mostly from stakeholder groups such as school boards, teachers and parents (Alberta Education 1984d, 1-2).

> Further representation was received through meetings with the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Trustees' Association, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, university personnel, and the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. In addition, members of the Minister's Advisory Committee and the Project Team attended a series of public forums sponsored by the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations (Alberta Education 1984c, 1).

Besides the public input, the Department of Education analyzed various other documents and reports related to secondary education, and commissioned four academic studies on issues pertinent to Alberta's secondary education review (Alberta Education 1984e, 1).

> Public input into the review was to be guided by four specific questions:
> 1. What is the purpose of secondary education?
> 2. What attitudes, knowledge and skills are required of secondary education students?
> 3. In what ways can students learn best?
> 4. What are the roles, rights and responsibilities of all the participants in schooling?
>
> (Alberta Education 1984c, 4).

The report that emerged from the public consultation was also structured on the basis of these questions (Alberta Education 1984c).

While the government was not criticized for trying to encourage public participation *per se*, there was criticism about some aspects of the way the participation occurred. For example, the education survey sent to every household in the province was seen as biased by some, to obtain the results that the government wanted to hear. One critical article in the Calgary Herald put it this way:

> [T]he education survey that's been circulated to nearly every home in Alberta seems to have a definite slant.
>
> That is, the survey seems calculated to elicit responses with which the government will be happy, responses that will reinforce its current thinking about the way the province's education system should go (White 1984, A8).

In particular, White focuses on questions about students being prepared for the "modern world" and international competition. These themes, he notes, were themes that Premier Lougheed had personally been emphasizing. To illustrate this point, White quotes from a speech Lougheed had given at a recent Alberta PC convention. Lougheed said,

> We must modify our school curriculum so the graduates of our educational system are able to compete in the new-world marketplace. . . . We have to change our education program in a way that focuses upon training people to be involved in international marketing. . . . We can show the rest of the country how to be the best salesman in the world (White 1984, A8).

White thus wondered if Alberta's public school curriculum was going to be "subordinated to the particular policy position of a government of the day." In other words, it looked to him that Lougheed's views about the importance of international trade would become a theme emphasized in the curriculum. Importantly, he noted that "It is really rather unusual, if not unprecedented, for a premier to express such a particular interest in one component of the junior and senior high school curriculum" (White 1984, A8).

The ATA also raised criticisms about the public participation. It pointed out, for example, that only 10,000 of the questionnaires were returned out of more than 850,000. This indicated a lack of real public involvement. It also thought that the 3000 student "opinionnaires" were insufficient, and questioned the weight given to the Gallup poll of 1000 people (Bosetti 1986, 85). Concerns were also raised by people in a number of stakeholder groups about the participation of certain interest groups in the public forums that were held for the review. Those people "felt that the Chamber of Commerce and Manpower oriented groups as well as the Religious and Christian groups exercised a great deal of influence at the public forums by articulating their views at every given opportunity, and perhaps at the expense of the opportunities for other individuals and less organized groups to express their views effectively" (Bosetti 1986, 85-86). These criticisms raised questions about how representative the public consultation aspects of the review really were.

While the Secondary Education Review (SER) was underway, the Canadian Education Association (CEA) held its annual conference in Edmonton in September 1984. Lougheed was invited to speak at the conference. Again, Lougheed addressed his view that students needed to be prepared for competition in the world market. He also decided to respond to the criticism his government had received "because it appeared that the caucus was significantly involved in the decisions regarding the secondary review at the expense of educational professionals and parents" (Wilson 1995, 307). Lougheed's response was that when it came to education policy making, "the elected provincial representatives must reassert their constitutional responsibility on policy" (Wilson 1995, 307).

Early in January 1985 the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee, Foundation for the Future, was released. One of the major themes was to make the secondary program more focused, and more challenging for students. For example, there was a focus on student competence. The report recommended that:

> -- Criteria be established to determine the attainment of skills and knowledge at each level of the core curriculum.
> -- A standard of excellence be set for all students, with the expectation that competence be demonstrated on an ongoing basis (Alberta Education 1984c, 6-7).

In Dave King's words, one of the "notable departures" from the existing system recommended by the report is the "idea of identifying a little bit more clearly what students have accomplished in school . . . [and that] promotion or completion should be based on demonstrated competence rather than simply time spent in the classroom" (in Kondro 1985a, A1). There was also a recommendation to keep departmental exams: "It is recommended that provincial diploma examinations be maintained at the Grade 12 level and constitute a portion of each student's final marks" (Alberta Education 1984c, 11). Furthermore, there were recommendations to make mathematics compulsory until Grade 11, rather than the existing Grade 10, and making Social Studies compulsory to Grade 12 (Weatherbe 1985a, 28). There were many other recommendations as well, but this sample provides an idea of the report's focus.

In Wilson's (1995) view, the report reflected the importance that the government was placing on the linkage between school and business. For example, the second of the two purposes of secondary education outlined in the report focuses on preparing students to find their place in the economy.

> The purpose of secondary education is twofold: to provide a broadly-based education aimed at stimulating and nurturing the abilities of students; and to provide the initial stages of career preparation by developing basic work skills, with an emphasis on fostering appropriate attitudes and awareness of the requirements of the world of work (Alberta Education 1984c, 5).

As well, there was the explicit discussion of the need for business to be more involved in secondary education.

> Secondary education must prepare students for involvement in the world of work through skill and attitude development. Business, industry and labour should assume greater responsibility for developing a working partnership with schools by designing high-quality work experience programs characterized by clear expectations and good communication between the employer, the school and the student. Employers must be encouraged to participate with educators in communicating their expectations of both the program and the students, in terms of required attitudes, behaviors and skills (Alberta Education 1984c, 7).

In Wilson's view, this is evidence of the "government's apparent preoccupation with the school-work linkage" (1995, 315) that results from seeing education as an aspect of the government's economic policy. When the report was released Halvar Jonson told reporters that it had been influenced by the government's White Paper on Industrial and Science Strategy (Kondro 1985a, A2).

Generally speaking, reaction to the report was favourable. The opening sentence of one Edmonton Journal editorial began, "Recommendations of the Alberta advisory committee on secondary education -- which call for tougher academic standards for high school students -- are both reasonable and sensible" (1985a, A6). An equivalent Calgary Herald editorial was much more critical, but did note that the stronger core requirements were "appealing," and also pointed out that "A more rigorous and challenging course of studies, and clearly defined and communicated expectations for teachers would be welcomed by most Albertans" (1985a, A4). The report was seen as reflecting the public's desire for an emphasis on basics in education. Education professor Richard Butt of the University of Lethbridge described the report as being "a good summary of recent public concern about the basics." In his view, the report was "comprehensive, thorough, and small 'c' conservative" (Weatherbe 1985a, 28).

One sentence in the report did cause a lot of criticism, however: "The spiritual and moral character of society could be enhanced through school activities such as recitation of the Lord's Prayer" (Alberta Education 1984c, 7). This was not a recommendation, just a comment, yet it generated considerable negative attention, especially in the Edmonton Journal. In a front page article in that paper, ATA president Nadene Thomas was quoted as saying returning to the Lord's Prayer in classrooms "would set the clock back 50 years." As well, a civil liberties activist was quoted as saying it would be a violation of the Constitution if the prayer was "rammed down students' throats" (Lord 1985a, A1). Many people, including fundamentalist preachers, were opposed to the idea. In commenting on the controversy, Halvar Jonson noted the idea had come from the public during the review. As he put it, "people felt there should be more emphasis placed on prayer and patriotism" (Locherty 1985, B1).

With the release of the report, the second part of the Secondary Education Review process began. The public and stakeholder groups were invited to respond to the Committee's report. On the basis of these responses, the Committee revised its report, and in an unpublished form presented it to the Minister. The Department of Education then used it to draft a policy document. After reviewing the policy document, the

Minister's Advisory Committee was dissolved in June 1985 (Bosetti 1986, 70). The policy document was to be the government's plan for changes to secondary education in Alberta.

In March 1985 the Alberta PCs held their party convention. When Lougheed spoke to the convention, he again emphasized the role of the government in education policy, and the importance of the SER.

> Our young people have to face a tough competitive world. I think it is unfair that graduates from our high schools are not as well qualified as they should be to compete in that world marketplace. We have a good education system. There is no question about that but we can make it better. I have done my own little poll and I will try four examples only on you. Explain to me how we get a dollar on an oil royalty; explain to me what a demand loan is; explain to me where the Slave River is [a river in northern Alberta running north-south] and what it means to Alberta and; explain to me where the Heritage Savings Trust Fund revenues come from. I don't get that many good answers. Now, who is at fault? It is not the teachers or the students. Who is responsible under the Constitution? The people who are responsible are the Legislators of Alberta and the government Party. . . . We are going to come with some changes that I think are so important . . . in terms of geography, history and economics emphasized at the provincial and national level; and Social Studies mandatory until grade 12. . . .
>
> Secondly, many Junior High School options should be discontinued and more emphasis placed on core subjects. Third, minimum hourly requirements in Mathematics, Science and Social Studies should be increased . . . there is going to be resistance – there always is to change. . . . It is coming fast. . . . It is coming within weeks . . . let's move it through. We are the government Party, we are responsible. If it [education] isn't adequate, we have got to make those changes (in Wilson 1995, 318-319).

Three points should be noted about Lougheed's comments. First, the emphasis on the need to make the education system more stringent, i.e., requiring greater effort from the students. Secondly, there is again emphasis on the government as having the responsibility for education policy, not other groups such as the teachers. And thirdly, it is clear that Lougheed personally saw this as a very important policy area, and his government's impending secondary education policy as being especially necessary.

Interestingly, Lougheed mentioned questions he would ask people about different aspects of the province's geography and economy, and he was concerned when very few people could give him correct answers. Reno Bosetti brought this up in my interview with him. Clearly, Lougheed saw the inability of people to answer these questions as a result of a deficiency in the education system. This was something that genuinely concerned him, and he wanted it fixed.

The Release of the New Policy

On June 12, 1985 the government's new policy on secondary education was released at a press conference held by Education Minister Dave King and Premier Peter Lougheed. The Premier's presence at a press conference on education policy was unusual, to say the least. Wilson explained it this way: "To reflect the importance he attached to it and the influence he had upon its direction, the Premier himself was the focal point of the press conference with Education Minister King at his side" (1995, 319). An article in Alberta Report pointed out, "Both the format of the announcement and the premier's personal involvement in a purely departmental matter were unprecedented" (Bergman, Cohen, and Milner 1985, 12). There can be little doubt that Lougheed considered this to be a very significant policy initiative of his government.

The policy document released at the press conference was called Secondary Education in Alberta (Government of Alberta 1985). It laid out the principles underlying the new policy as well as the specific details about changes in courses and diploma requirements. Like the previous statement Foundation for the Future, this statement reflected the government's commitment to make secondary education more rigorous.

> Education is a high priority for the Government of Alberta. This policy statement reflects that priority by setting a new, more challenging direction for our secondary school program -- a new direction which will provide the basis for an education system committed to excellence. We believe a commitment to excellence in our schools will encourage excellence in students and in all others involved with education (Government of Alberta 1985, 3).

A central aspect of this was focusing on the "basics" of education: "We must strive to graduate young people who are well educated, with a firm foundation of the basic knowledge and skills" (Government of Alberta 1985, 4). Indeed, this document summarizes the thrust of the new policy in three points:

> - a firm purpose and a clear statement of goals for a program that will challenge students and encourage them to pursue excellence.
> - a program which has a focus on strengthening basic skills and knowledge through a core of required subjects.
> - a challenging set of courses that complement and support the core of the program (Government of Alberta 1985, 25).

It seems, then, that the new policy emphasized increasing student performance in the "core" areas. A number of optional courses were dropped, more time was to be spent on the core subjects, and the requirements for passing from one grade to another were increased (Bergman, Cohen, and Milner 1985, 12).

This new secondary education policy was the result of the government's White Paper initiative in the field of education. The White Paper had called for changes in Alberta's education system, and this was at least one manifestation of those changes. The relationship between the new policy and the White Paper was made explicit.

> The principles and the objectives described in this policy statement are consistent with, and reinforce, the thrust of the Government's White Paper: "Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1990" which states that "Education should foster ideas of risk-taking, innovation and the pursuit of excellence". This policy statement sets the direction for change to meet those objectives. The next step will be a consistent and deliberate review of the content and objectives of our curriculum to ensure that the directions set in this paper are achieved (Government of Alberta 1985, 4).

Education was seen as part of the government's wider strategy of economic development and the Secondary Education Review was an attempt to bring secondary education in line with that wider strategy.

The new policy was widely seen as a "back to basics" initiative. The front page article in the Calgary Herald discussing the new policy was entitled "Education to return to 3 Rs" (Pratt 1985, A1). The Edmonton Sun saw the new policy as more evidence of the government's turn away from "the latest liberal trends" in education that it had pursued in the 1970s. While the government followed those trends in the 1970s, its change of heart was seen by the early 1980s in the reinstitution of provincial exams, and now even more clearly in the new secondary education policy. "All of which proves that if you stick around long enough in government you get to correct even the most monumental blunders" (Edmonton Sun 1985, 10). Interestingly, Lougheed himself gave an interpretation of his government's education policy not that far removed from the account of the Edmonton Sun. In an interview with Alberta Report shortly after he announced he was resigning at the end of June 1985 (only a couple of weeks after the secondary education policy was released), he was asked the following question: "In education you reportedly waited for several years to make the basic changes you recently announced. Why did you delay?" To this Lougheed responded:

> The people involved wanted to test it out with the areas of the educational community to assure the basic thrust was pragmatic. When we first came to office we faced the Worth Commission in the early 1970s and accepted it. We accepted it, being new in office, because of the esteem the members of the Worth Commission had in the educational community. If we had known what we then learned in a few years, we would not have made the recommendations made by the Worth Commission (Alberta Report 1985, 17).

Thus the new secondary education policy did represent a change from the PC government's earliest education policy. Yet another observer, Kilpatrick, describes the place of the new secondary education policy in the PC period the following way:

> After 12 years of conflict, debate and great public expense the liberal reforms of the Worth Commission (1972) were replaced by the macrotechnical reforms of the macropolitical ideological basics movement. The policy shift changed the philosophy and direction of a high school education (1988, 61).

And Lougheed himself played a role in this change, probably a leading role. This was clearly an initiative that came from the government itself as opposed to the education establishment or stakeholder groups.

Enough information has already been presented to demonstrate that the Secondary Education Review emerged from the government's broader program of economic development and diversification. As well, it is clear that Lougheed himself was a major player -- perhaps the major player -- pushing the new secondary education policy initiative. Wilson's comment that Lougheed had considerable influence on the direction of the new policy has already been cited (1995, 319). Others have noted this as well. Bosetti (1986) interviewed a number of people in the major stakeholder groups involved in the SER. She writes that it is the opinion of many of those interviewed "that the Secondary Education Review was the result of an internal, or government initiative, rather than in response to a public demand for change in the current secondary education program" (1986, 100). One question that guided Bosetti in her research was: "What were the significant issues perceived by the various actors in the environment that generated a need for the development of the Secondary Education Policy?" She begins the list of factors by stating, "The most significant factor identified by the majority of the actors was Premier Lougheed's determination to make education a top government priority" (1986, 117). Similarly, Kilpatrick states that the SER "was a government policy statement and was not articulated through the Department of Education. The major thrust of the policy came from the politicians led by the former premier of the province, Peter Lougheed" (1988, 63). This appears to be the consensus of the literature on the SER: Premier Lougheed was a driving force for this education policy initiative.

The policy statement released by Lougheed in June 1985 was just the beginning of the changes that the SER would lead to. As the statement itself noted, "The programs we plan today will begin to have their earliest impact in the late 1980s and their full impact on students who will graduate in the 1990s" (Government of Alberta 1985, 4). The first actual implementation of the new policy was the development of a compulsory course called Career and Life Management (CALM) that was to teach everyday living skills. CALM was "the first new course to be implemented in Alberta Senior High Schools since 1966 when the grade 10 Physical Education course was introduced" (Bosetti 1990, 61).

VISION FOR THE NINETIES

The SER solidified the government's intention to focus on "excellence" and higher standards for Alberta's education system. "Beginning with the reforms to the secondary educational curriculum in 1985, the Alberta government has steadily strengthened its commitment to content-oriented education" (Manzer 1994, 246). The next major thrust in this direction came with the release of Vision for the nineties . . . a plan of action (Alberta Education 1991b) in September 1991. This was the initiative of Jim Dinning, who had become Minister of Education in 1988. Dinning explained to me that he started out as Minister trying to be nice to everyone, but grew frustrated because nothing was getting done that way. As a result, he decided actively to steer the system towards an emphasis on "results." Many of the themes of the document reflected the same emphasis that Lougheed had promoted earlier, such as the need to be competitive in the global economy, and the need to emphasize basic skills. Dinning acknowledged that his initiatives in this area were a continuation of policy emphasis from the Lougheed period.

The Preface to this document sets the stage for justifying the policy it proposes as being necessary due to "the emergence of a highly competitive and integrated global economy."

> Education is the key to our young people being full partners in shaping a global future ... in shaping our province's and our nation's future. Business and community leaders, parents, and people from all walks of life are saying that if we want to be able to compete in the world of the future, we need to lay that groundwork now. And that groundwork comes from an education system which is second to none (Alberta Education 1991b, 1).

Preparing Alberta's students for global competition requires the promotion of excellence. "Excellence for all students is what the vision is all about. It's a vision for education that focuses on goals, results, and accountability" (Alberta Education 1991b, 2).

More specifically, Vision for the nineties sets out specific goals for improving the education system. For example, it proposes to "Improve Student Achievement Standards." This means it is necessary to "develop and clearly specify high standards of what we expect students to know and be able to do in all areas of study so that all students are challenged to achieve." Another proposal was to "Improve Student Testing and Evaluation." There is also the proposal to "Improve Our Focus on Results and Accountability to Albertans." This includes developing "provincial indicators and measures to assess and make ongoing improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system," and providing "Albertans with regular reports on educational standards, and on the performance of students and the education system" (Alberta Education 1991b, 8). These themes would continue to receive emphasis in Ralph Klein's education policy.

There was also to be an emphasis on educational results and basic skills. Part of the plan was to "Implement Results-Based Curriculum." This meant clearly specifying "levels of what we expect students to learn throughout the provincial curriculum to foster continuity in student learning, to inform parents and other partners about student progress, and to demonstrate our high expectations for our graduates" (Alberta Education 1991b, 10). Furthermore, the plan was to "Emphasize Basic Skills Across the Curriculum" which meant "to ensure the development of basic skills, including math, interpersonal, and communication skills, such as speaking, debating, spelling and writing, is emphasized across all areas of study throughout education" (Alberta Education 1991b, 12).

Of course, this plan had both supporters and critics outside of the government. People advocating conservative-oriented educational reforms were happy with it. Joe Freedman, a Red Deer medical doctor who has been a very prominent (small 'c') conservative education reformer said it was "the best thing to happen in education in years. Being based on real results is a quantum leap forward" (in Bell 1991b, 58). On the other hand, Don Massey, an education professor and provincial Liberal candidate at the time, saw it as advocating education that serves the dominant economic interests in the province. The ideas for the plan came from "people outside the classroom," according to Massey (Bell 1991c, 44). The Liberals' education critic, Yolande Gagnon, saw the initiative as a ploy by Jim Dinning to advance his own career. As she put it, "He's trying to prove to the chamber of commerce we've got what it takes. In fact, he's using this plan to launch his campaign for the [Progressive] Conservative leadership" (in Bell 1991a, 29).

Before Vision for the nineties was released, Dinning had agreed to have the Department of Education cooperate with the Alberta Chamber of Resources (ACR) in a study comparing the content of math and science education with that of Japan, Germany, and Hungary. The idea had come from Joe Freedman who originally convinced the Chamber of Resources to undertake the study in November 1990. Dinning accepted the idea in March 1991. The study, entitled International Comparisons in Education, was released in March 1992, and purported to "add to the accelerating dialogue on the quality of education in Alberta, and to present a business perspective" (Alberta Education and ACR 1992, 1). This perspective was basically that Alberta compared unfavourably with the comparison countries which all had a stronger focus on math and science. The education systems of those countries emphasized achievement, outcomes, standards, and tests. Furthermore, their societal values supported a strong work ethic, self-discipline, and the acquisition of skills. In contrast, societal values in Alberta "drifted towards individualism, self-discovery and self-indulgence, and resistance appears to have built up against the operation of a more demanding, outcome focused education system" (Alberta Education and ACR 1992, 2). The report recommended that Alberta adopt the successful practices of the comparison nations, especially by focusing on academic achievement. "Education policy makers need to continue enthusiastically with the focus on academic achievement as a top priority, and to do their part to facilitate improvement of education practices including incorporating lessons from effective school models" (Alberta Education and ACR 1992, 3).

Interestingly, this study explicitly endorsed Vision for the nineties calling it a "milestone" for the perspective it set for Alberta's education system. "This study is supportive of the vision and the priorities outlined in Hon. Jim Dinning's 'Visions [sic] for the nineties ... a plan of action', and is heartened by the focus on achievement of academic excellence and the support for mathematics and science" (Alberta Education and ACR 1992, 3). All was not well, however.

> There is much in the document [i.e., Vision for the nineties] that the observations and findings of this report support. There remains however an uneasiness that the dramatic education improvements that are envisioned may not be possible to implement in the face of a large and established system. It may be necessary to introduce more fundamental changes to the education system itself (Alberta Education and ACR 1992, 8).

In my view, this last comment anticipates the restructuring by the Klein administration. Certainly the thrust of the recommendations of the report are strongly reflected in the kinds of initiatives undertaken by Klein.

THE KLEIN PERIOD

After Ralph Klein became Premier, but before the 1993 election, his government produced a document entitled Seizing Opportunity: Alberta's New Economic Development Strategy (Government of Alberta 1993). In an "Open Letter to Albertans" on the first page, Klein says the document provides "a strategy to create jobs and ensure that Alberta remains competitive in a rapidly changing global economy" (Government of Alberta 1993, 1). In its brief comments on education, it continues to advocate the theme of the previous PC administrations.

> As a society, we must take action to create a culture committed to ongoing excellence in academic achievement and technical competence. There is a need to improve the level of basic skills among Albertans by ensuring that all students graduating from secondary school achieve a basic level of competence

(Government of Alberta 1993, 20).

This idea would continue to appear as a theme of the Klein government's education policy.

In January 1994 the business plan for the Department of Education was released. It claimed that "The changes outlined in this plan will alter substantially the character of the education system and ensure a bright future for our students" (Alberta Education 1994, 3). Among the many goals laid out, a number dealt with standards and testing. With regard to standards, one goal was to "Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure high standards are established, communicated and achieved." One result of this was to be that "Students achieve the standards in the provincial curriculum and perform well against national standards." Another goal was to "Establish a more accountable education system." This would be done through expanding "provincial testing programs," establishing "Provincial and local education performance measures," and having "School, jurisdiction and provincial reports on results to the public" (Alberta Education 1994, 4).

As part of the move to make the system more accountable, schools would be required to report their students' results on achievement tests and diploma exams. In line with this, the number of provincial achievement tests was increased by the Department of Education.

> Previously it had tested students in each of grades 3, 6, and 9 on one of mathematics, English, social studies, or science each year (on a rotating basis). Beginning in the 1994/5 school year, it began to administer annual tests to grade 3 students on all three of reading, writing, and arithmetic and to grade 6 and 9 students on all four of the 'core' subjects -- English, mathematics, social studies, and science (Bruce and Schwartz 1997, 392).

Thus provincial testing played a prominent role in the education program of the Klein administration. The increase in testing, combined with an emphasis on increasing education standards, constituted another theme of Klein's education policy that was firmly and absolutely rooted in the Lougheed years.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the Lougheed period the government abolished the compulsory provincial exams as recommended by most educators, the Worth Commission in particular. However, within a couple of years increasing public concern was evident over alleged declining educational standards. The abolition of the exams was seen as having played a role in this decline. Lougheed had also become concerned, and government policy began to change. As he told biographer David Wood,

> In the early days, we bought much of what the Worth Commission advocated, even though some of it was nonsense. For example, that's when we eliminated [departmental] examinations; we weren't very smart about that. But we've learned, and we're determined to swing the pendulum back a reasonable distance (Wood 1985, 105).

This was also noted by educational observers such as Walter Worth who said that "in the mid-to-late 1970s Lougheed started talking about back-to-the-basics, and he supported greater emphases on history and geography and more traditional approaches" (in McIntosh and Hodysh 1992, 25).

Thus issues such as reinstating the exams arose, with the government setting up MACOSA to investigate the problem. In spite of MACOSA's recommendation not to reinstitute compulsory exams, Education Minister David King did reinstitute them. While the controversy over exams was taking place, a concurrent controversy about the need to raise educational standards through changing the curriculum manifested itself in such documents as the Harder Report. Ultimately, again under King, the government moved to strengthen educational standards. With the departure of King and Lougheed, the momentum to emphasize "excellence" (a manifestation of curriculum) and accountability (a manifestation of testing) continued in the provincial government's education policy. They were exhibited in Klein's education policy, but had clearly been a central feature of PC education policy long before Klein came along.

This means that there has been a consistent approach to curriculum content and testing by the PC government beginning by the late 1970s. Some commentators have called this a "back to basics" thrust. Whatever the terminology, the government has emphasized the need to focus on essential skills, rather than learning experiences it saw as peripheral. As well, it has emphasized the use of tests to measure student achievement, to see what is actually being learned. Neither of these emphases have apparently been shared by the bulk of professional educators. Although it was the Lougheed government that was responsible for the policy that became the focus of public concern (i.e., the abolition of departmental exams), that resulted from the momentum of previous policy rather than its own carefully thought-out education policy. The government was preoccupied with other matters in its first term of office. When the Lougheed government began to focus more attention on education, a more coherent policy began to emerge. The initial manifestations of this occurred under Minister of Education Julian Koziak, in such forms as the creation of the Curriculum Policies Board, the Harder Report, and the Goals of Basic Education. But it was Dave King who reinstated compulsory departmental exams and undertook the Secondary Education Review, both with the strong support of Premier Lougheed. While Don Getty did not discernably involve himself in education policy while Premier, his Education Minister Jim Dinning (like King) also wanted to improve student achievement and to measure that through regular testing. Thus the initiatives of the Klein government are not unique in this area of education policy, and represent clear continuity with the previous PC administrations.

CHAPTER 6

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Besides the governance and funding of education, the content and measurement of students' education, and alternatives to the otherwise monopolistic provision of education, a major aspect of education policy is the relationship between the provincial government and educational professionals, namely the teachers. While the main function of the teachers' union is to negotiate employment contracts with the school boards, it does much more than that. The ATA has a comprehensive interest in education policy since virtually all policy has some impact on the well-being of the teachers it represents. The governance and funding of education affects the terms of teachers' employment and their emolument. The content and measurement of education affects what they teach, how they teach it, and the degree of discretion allowed in their teaching. Alternatives to the public education system, like private schools, sometimes provide competition in the form of non-unionized and lower paid teachers. Thus the ATA has an interest in, and influence on, virtually all aspects of education policy.

The ASTA is often considered to be the rival of the ATA. But while the ASTA is an important player in Alberta's education policy community, it is not as significant as the ATA. The membership of the ASTA is considerably smaller than that of the ATA. As a result, its financial resources and staff are much less than the ATA's. On many issues the ASTA cannot operate with the same degree of internal cohesion as the ATA. Rural and urban boards often have different perspectives on issues. Before the province took full control of education funding, rich and poor boards also often differed. While teachers have differences of opinion amongst themselves, the disparity is usually much smaller on issues related to teacher welfare, and thus the ATA can present a more united front than the ASTA in many cases. With the ATA being the more powerful player in education policy in Alberta, it becomes a necessary topic for consideration in this study of education policy.

More importantly, however, is the fact that the ATA's role in Alberta's education system is a legislated one. By law the ATA is the sole representative of public and separate school teachers in employment bargaining, and is also the professional association for those teachers. Just as legislative changes affecting the role of school boards in education governance signal changes in education policy, so also do legislative changes in the role of the ATA as the teachers' professional and bargaining organization. During the PC period legislated changes to the role of the ATA have been seriously considered, and the process of certifying teachers, an aspect of teacher professionalization that the ATA has been involved in, was changed. Furthermore, most of the education cutbacks made by the Klein government were absorbed in teacher salary reductions agreed to by the ATA. Thus it is inescapable that a comprehensive analysis of education policy would include coverage of issues related to the ATA. The ATA is not just another interest group in the education policy community, it is not even just the most important interest group, it is an official part of the Alberta education system. Thus we include a chapter on the ATA.

THE ATA AS AN INTEREST GROUP

Of course, the ATA can be analyzed as an interest group in the policy community. In the categorization scheme developed by Paul Pross, the ATA can easily be slotted as an "institutionalized group," the most highly developed. On Pross' continuum of interest groups, institutionalized groups are at one end, while "nascent groups" are at the other. Between these two are "mature" and "fledgling" groups, with mature being towards the institutionalized end, and fledgling being closer to the nascent end (Pross 1992, 98-99).

The ATA exhibits virtually all the characteristics that an influential interest group could hope to attain. The size of membership of an organization is important. In 1993, the ATA had over 45,000 members (ATA 1993, 16). Needless to say, that is a sizeable amount for any interest group in Alberta. Interestingly, Pross says that the proportion of a group represented by an organization is more important than its size. "An association that is the sole mouthpiece of an interest and that is basically representative of it has a legitimacy that enhances access and accords some influence" (Pross 1992, 103). As mentioned, the ATA is the sole representative organization for Alberta teachers, and therefore does well by this standard.

Aside from membership, organizational structure is another factor in the sophistication of an interest group. The actual form of the structure is not what is at issue, but the degree to which the structure is able to give the group influence. An organization can do that by being competent in five areas, according to Pross. It must have "aggregative" and "articulative" capacity, which are the abilities to establish internal agreement and communicate members' views to others; "strategic" capacity, or the ability to forecast and plan ahead; "mobilization" capacity, which means the ability to mobilize members to apply pressure on governments; and "coalitional" capacity, namely networking and cooperating with other organizations (Pross 1992, 105). The ATA is very effective in each of these areas.

The next factor for rating the institutionalization of an interest group is the group's resources. Pross summarizes the role of resources this way:

> The institutionalized group we would expect to have considerable financial, staff, and information resources and institutional qualities – that is, the intangible resources – that permit the fullest realization of their potential. The quality of the group's collective leadership would be high. The group would be known for its internal cohesion. It would be widely accepted publicly -- particularly in its policy community – largely on the basis of its track record. Through the leadership, the group's broad information resources would be augmented by extensive process and substantive knowledge (Pross 1992, 110).

Again, the ATA fulfills all the requirements of an institutionalized group.

The final factor discussed by Pross is what he calls "outputs." These he defines as "[a]ll those externally oriented activities that have explicit policy content . . . They include not only policy positions that are formally adopted by groups and expressed in their letters, press releases, and reports, but also lobbying related activities" (Pross 1992, 111). The ATA produces letters, press releases, and reports, and also conducts lobbying, thus demonstrating all the outputs one would expect from an highly institutionalized group.

As an highly institutionalized group according to Pross' criteria, one would expect the ATA to be very influential in Alberta's education policy community, as it is. Indeed, no other interest group in that policy community, including the ASTA, can match the degree of institutionalization of the ATA. That fact, in and of itself, is probably enough to justify special attention being focused on it. Indeed, in the United States teacher unions have increasingly been the focus of political analysis. They have emerged as an important component in the study of education policy.

AMERICAN TEACHER UNION POLITICS

Teacher unions have recently been receiving considerable attention as political players in the United States. Before the 1960s, there was a low rate of unionization among American teachers. However, during that decade unionization began to increase dramatically, and as the two major US teacher unions became quite large, their political role and clout also became a factor in American politics. By the 1980s, their political significance was recognized and began to be analyzed.

In the US there are two major teacher unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The NEA was founded in 1857 by school superintendents. Teachers were encouraged to join, but the NEA was not yet a union and did not engage in collective bargaining. Instead, it tried to advance teacher interests through state legislation. The AFT, on the other hand, was founded as a teacher union in 1916, its first official member being John Dewey, the prominent philosopher and educationalist. It had a very difficult time organizing teachers until it won a vote to represent New York City's teachers in 1961. This was a decisive event in American teacher unionization. The AFT had defeated the NEA in this election, and from this point onwards there was a race between these two unions to organize unrepresented teachers. In order to make itself more attractive, the NEA transformed itself into an outright teacher union like the AFT. Both dramatically increased their membership as they competed from the 1960s through to the 1980s, so that by 1995 the NEA had almost 2.3 million members (up from 766,000 in 1961), and the AFT over 900,000 (up from 71,000 in 1961) (Lieberman 1997, 1-2, 10-16, 19). This dramatic increase in membership also led to a corresponding increase in influence. "These unions are the major components of 'the education establishment,' and they play an extremely influential role, not just in education but in politics and the economy as well" (Lieberman 1997, 1).

The NEA and AFT are very active politically at the national level, and their state affiliates are very active at the state level. Both teacher unions give large donations to political candidates at the national level, and in both cases almost all money goes to Democratic Party candidates. The NEA has been among the top 10 political action committees in terms of dollars contributed since 1989. As well, many teacher union activists are involved politically, "At the 1996 Democratic convention, more delegates (405) were NEA members than the numbers of delegates from any state except California" (Lieberman 1997, 66). Officials from both teacher unions have played prominent roles in Democratic Party affairs (Lieberman 1997, 80, 85).

At the state level, teacher unions are in some cases even more influential. The situation varies from state to state, but the overall picture is clear.

> In a large majority of states, the state education association affiliated with the NEA is one of the three most effective interest groups active in state politics. There is

> overwhelming agreement on this point among political scientists who have studied interest group participation in state politics (Lieberman 1997, 105).

"Indisputably, the state teacher unions are a major political force whose influence extends far beyond educational policy" (Lieberman 1997, 107).

The state of Alabama provides a good example of teacher union power at the state level. Right through the 1960s, the teacher union, the Alabama Education Association (AEA), had little political involvement or influence. However, in 1969 Paul Hubbert became the head of the AEA and embarked on an ambitious project of involving teachers in politics. Hubbert was very successful, and by the end of the 1970s, teachers had become a major force in Alabama politics. The success of this teacher activism became especially apparent in the 1980s (Ehrenhalt 1991, 170-172).

> By the time the House and Senate met for their 1985 session, the membership included 40 active or retired teachers out of a total of 140. There were 22 lawyers, barely half the proportion there had been a decade before. The House had only 9 lawyers out of 105 members, and only one lawyer who had been there as long as three years. By 1987 the number of teachers in the legislature had increased further. The Alabama ethics commission reported that 58 of 140 were teachers, former teachers or spouses of teachers (Ehrenhalt 1991, 172-173).

It wasn't by accident that the proportion of teachers in the state legislature increased so dramatically; there had been a concerted effort by the AEA to increase the role of teachers in politics. This made a significant impact on the ability of the AEA to have favourable legislation passed. "By 1986 it was widely believed around the Alabama legislature that Paul Hubbert could determine the course of votes simply by giving a thumbs-up or thumbs-down signal to his loyalists on the floor" (Ehrenhalt 1991, 182). By the mid-1980s "teachers had become the strongest single presence in Alabama politics" (Ehrenhalt 1991, 187).

Not only are teacher unions active on the national and state level in the US, they are also active at the local, school board level. In many instances teacher unions play a role in school board elections. "[E]specially in larger districts, board members rely on support from teacher unions to be elected or appointed. This reliance renders them less likely to support pupil and parent interests over those of teachers" (Lieberman 1993, 61).

The growth of teacher union political power in the US has led to greater attention being paid to them and criticism of their activities. Teacher unions, it is claimed, have significant advantages over their opponents in conflicts over education policy, and this helps them further the interests of teachers.

> Teachers improve their situation by political action, not by increased efficiency or greater productivity. Thus a large share of teacher resources supports an infrastructure that is focused directly on media and politics. The unions have legislative staff, media relations, research departments, and other agencies whose raison d'etre is to influence media and politicians. When controversies over educational policy arise, these structures are in place, whereas the resources for opposing union positions must often be raised on an ad hoc basis (Haar, Lieberman and Troy 1994, 150).

There is also another sense in which teacher unions can be said to enjoy political power not held by other groups. Teacher unions can take strike action as a way to pressure the government to adopt policies favoured by them. "From a government perspective, a teacher strike is a suspension of a public service. It is a suspension of a public service until one special interest, the teacher union, achieves public policies that are acceptable to it." This power on the part of teacher unions "reflects a political inequality of considerable importance; one special interest group can suspend public services to achieve the public policies they seek, the rest of us cannot do so" (Haar, Lieberman, and Troy 1994, 153).

The emerging critique of teacher unions even goes beyond concerns about the growing political power they have. It has been argued in the US that teacher unions have been expanding and achieving their goals precisely at the same time as student performance, as measured by standardized tests, has been going down and education expenditures going up. Hoxby's complex empirical analysis tracing unionization, education expenditures, and student performance lays some of the blame for increased expenditures and declining performance on the teacher unions. While increasing expenditures on education can clearly be seen as a "good thing," Hoxby points out that most of the increase was used for two purposes: to increase teacher salaries and to hire more teachers to decrease the teacher-student ratio (1996, 700). However, while there are more teachers, and they are better paid, students have performed less well.

> In summary, the results indicate that teachers' unions succeed in raising school budgets and school inputs but have an overall negative effect on student performance. Much of the negative effect on student performance can be shown to be the result of decreased productivity of schools inputs. The remaining portion of the negative effect may represent omitted variables such as teacher effort or administrative encumbrances. It is striking that unionization is associated with both more generous school inputs and worse student achievement. This is strong evidence that teachers' unions are, indeed, a potential answer to the puzzle of increasing school spending and stagnant student performance in the post-1960 period (Hoxby 1996, 708-709).

"Rent-seeking" in this instance is defined as the situation where "teachers' unions prefer different inputs than parents do because the union's objective is not purely maximization of student achievement" (Hoxby 1996, 675-676). What this means is that these unions, like all unions and interest groups, are primarily concerned to advance the interests of their members. This does not mean that they are any more self-interested than other interest groups. Rather, they behave as the others do instead of acting (as they like to assert) for the benefit of the students or society at large.

No work has been done in Canada that is comparable to Hoxby's work on the situation in the US. However, it is clear that educational expenditures have risen in Canada at the same time as they were rising in the US, and that most of this additional expenditure went to teachers. In constant dollars, the cost of educating a student in Canada more than tripled between 1960 and 1982. "[O]f that increase, one-quarter is due to the change in the teacher/student ratio and almost 40 percent is due to the increase in teacher salaries" (Easton 1988, 43). Teacher salaries have risen in Canada relative to many other professions. From 1967 to 1983 "the ratio of teachers' salaries to university professor salaries has risen from 58 percent to 75 percent" (Easton 1988, 59).

> Both in terms of domestic income growth and by international comparison, Canada's teachers have made remarkable progress in raising their income over the last 40 years. This income growth is well above that enjoyed by the average of other members of Canadian society and is certainly greater than that which has taken place in the United States (Easton 1988, 48).

With regards to the growth of educational expenditures and the increase in teacher salaries, the Canadian situation is similar to that of the US.

THE ATA

However, it would not be fair to simply transfer the American analysis to Alberta and assume that all that has been said about the US teacher unions also applies to the ATA. For one thing, the ATA does not endorse and fund political candidates as its American counterparts do. As ATA official David Flower said to me in an interview, ATA members would support parties in Alberta in a similar proportion to the rest of the population. It is therefore not possible for the ATA to endorse a party or candidate without alienating a large segment of its membership. Thus the ATA is not a direct electoral actor as the American teacher unions are. While ATA officials do become involved in the parties (e.g., former ATA president Brendan Dunphy became president of the Alberta Liberal Party, and another former ATA president, Halvar Jonson, is currently a PC cabinet minister), this does not represent ATA political activity per se, but rather the individual preference of the person involved. Thus the concern expressed by American teacher union critiques is not a valid concern on the Alberta political scene.

The ATA appears to be sensitive to the desires of those members who do not want it to emphasize political activity. It does not want to alienate conservative minded teachers, or the general public, and this contributes to the constraints on political activity that it has.

> [M]any teachers are themselves essentially conservative. Their individual narratives and understanding of the changes in education over the past decade, and especially of the acceleration of these changes under the Klein administration, are colored by the same assumptions and prejudices that helped to bring the New Right into prominence in the first place. These are deeply ingrained beliefs, and therefore

> hard to change. In addition, the ATA mandate for action proscribes ideological action. The leadership is sensitive to possible politicization of its activities, especially as in Alberta this would most certainly produce a pernicious backlash from the public. Its mandate is primarily about teacher welfare and about the professional issues such as the professional code of conduct, for example (Soucek and Pannu 1996, 40).

This concern about provoking the public and some teachers helps to restrain the ATA from the kind of overt political activity common to the American teacher unions.

The ATA became the exclusive representative for teachers, with membership being compulsory, in the mid-1930s, long before the US teacher unions experienced their dramatic rise to prominence. Since compulsory membership in the ATA makes the use of replacement workers during a teachers' strike impossible, and since attendance at school is compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen, "publicly employed teachers are placed in an enviable collective bargaining position" (Kondra 1995, 47). However, one recent study of the ATA concluded that this position has not been used to extort outrageous wage settlements. "[O]n average, teachers in Alberta during 1978-91 have not seen their wages outstrip inflation as has been suggested in the past about public-sector unions. On the other hand, they have not experienced the same real decline in wages that the population as a whole have suffered from during the 1980s" (Kondra 1995, 121). Relatively speaking, the ATA has been able to ensure that teachers are being well paid, but it has not pushed for a situation where teacher salaries are exorbitant.

> The ATA has either been unwilling or unable to "milk the public purse," strikes have been relatively infrequent, and such strikes have not resulted in abnormally large wage increases. With the empirical evidence that ability to pay is now a driving force and the fact that the ATA appears to be willing to absorb wage cuts in line with the population as a whole, the ATA could continue to be an equitable and valuable representation tool for the [sic] Alberta's teachers (Kondra 1995, 122).

From this perspective, the ATA does not seem to be the same kind of organization that the American teacher unions are. Not only does it refrain from overt partisan political involvement, but it agreed to a wage cut in 1994 as part of the government's deficit-fighting strategy. This seems to be evidence of relative political moderation. The main point here, however, is that the recent American critiques of teacher unions cannot simply be imported and assumed to apply in Canada, or at least in Alberta. But that doesn't negate the fact that the ATA is an important political player in Alberta's education politics and that a comprehensive analysis of education in this province requires that attention be paid to the ATA's relationship with the government. The American critiques are correct to point out that teacher unions are significant participants in education politics, and this point is applicable to Alberta as well as the US.

The ATA's Deteriorating Relationship With The Lougheed Administration

Although the ATA, as an institutionalized pressure group, had a relatively cordial relationship with the Social Credit government, its relationship with the Progressive Conservative government has tended to be sour. Literature critical of the changes to education policy under Ralph Klein often allege that his government "attacked" the ATA and had selected it as a political "target." Sometimes the impression is given that the present government is different in this way, that things were better 'before'. However, long before Klein became premier, the ATA had experienced serious conflicts with previous PC administrations. The most turbulent period in the relationship between the two was probably 1985, when Dave King, the Minister of Education, proposed a new body to oversee teacher certification and decertification.

One important change instituted by the PCs regarding the Education portfolio must be borne in mind, namely, that educators were not appointed to the position as Social Credit had done as a matter of course. It is possible that this had some affect on the relationship between teachers and the government. Former University of Alberta education professor John Chalmers alludes to this.

> During the 36-year regime of Social Credit, there were eight ministers of education. Of these all but one had some sort of teaching credential when he assumed the

> portfolio. *It was probably at least partly for this reason that relations between the government and the education profession were usually harmonious.* When they were not the minister of education as a rule quickly found himself the ex-minister of education. But the Conservative successors did not follow the Social Credit lead when it came to appointing ministers to the education portfolio. Presumably acting on the widely held belief that, since everyone has attended school he is automatically an expert on education, Premiers Lougheed and Getty have tended to make their appointments accordingly (Chalmers 1988, 35; emphasis added).

For much of the period under Lougheed, relations between the government and the ATA were not harmonious, especially while Dave King was Education Minister.

Even before Dave King was Minister, however, conflict had arisen between the government and the ATA. Bernie Keeler, Executive Secretary of the ATA from the late 1960s until 1988, told me that, in his view, the relationship between the ATA and the government changed for the worse in 1975. In that year the ATA held a political forum which he understood that Lougheed believed to be anti-government. This alienated Lougheed from the ATA. Until that time the ATA had worked reasonably well with the government, but that relationship was no longer so positive after the political forum.

In 1978, the Saint John's Edmonton Report ran a story about the ATA's annual general meeting headlined "The ATA in '78: War on Lougheed & inner decay." In it, the reporter writes that, "ATA demands and recommendations which at one time virtually determined the course of Alberta education, have been increasingly ignored by the Lougheed cabinet which apparently discerns great public unhappiness with the education policies inherited from Social Credit, policies the ATA had such a strong hand in creating." As a result, at this particular convention "the frustrated association launched what looked like a counterattack." ATA president K.M. Kryzanowski reportedly admitted that his speech to the delegates "sounds like an harangue on this government." In fact, his speech lashed out "at the government in almost every aspect of education policy" (1978d, 30). The three things in particular that concerned the ATA were the government's strong central control in the new direction of curriculum development, government grant limitations, and the government's decision to accomodate religious private schools rather than appealing the *Weibe* decision, whereby a Department of Education decision to deny approval to a Mennonite private school was struck down in court (see chapter 7 for details). Education minister Julian Koziak, who also spoke at the meeting, tried to be more positive (Saint John's Edmonton Report 1978d, 30-31). However, according to this story, the relationship between the government and the ATA had definitely soured.

The ATA's own publication, the ATA News, carried a report on its president's speech to this convention entitled "Kryzanowski hits out at provincial government." This article also emphasized that the speech was one long attack on aspects of the PC government's education policy. It referred to Kryzanowski's concern over alleged lack of government funding for education, the accomodation of the religious private schools, as the previous article had mentioned, but also referred to a concern about provincial government interference in teachers' collective bargaining. It is clear that the ATA's president was being very critical of the Lougheed government (ATA News 1978, 3).

The Calgary Public School Strike

In my interview with David Flower, currently the editor of the ATA News, and a long-time official of the ATA, his view was that the relationship between the ATA and the Lougheed government had been "smooth" until the 1980 Calgary Public teachers' strike. From then onwards, in his view, the relationship was "up and down."

In May 1980 Calgary's public school teachers went on strike because of their inability to reach an agreement with the Calgary Board of Education over three issues: preparation time, class size, and salaries. The strike continued throughout the summer, so in August Minister of Labour Les Young appointed a fact-finding commission on teachers' working conditions headed by Dr. Arthur Kratzman. With the teachers and board still unable to come to agreement with the beginning of a new school year, an Order in Council from the provincial government ordered the teachers back to work on

September 26. This had been the longest teacher strike in Alberta's history, as measured by both school days lost and teaching days lost (ATA 1980, n.pp.).

The ATA's president, Mac Kryzanowski, was not happy about the provincial government's interference in the strike. In reflecting on the strike after it was over he wrote:

> There are several things that stand out. One is the government's insistence that they were not going to step into the Calgary strike, after having intervened in teacher strikes right across Alberta. They persisted in saying that they were going to let the parties settle it between themselves at the local level. I agreed with that. Then, 41 school days after the strike started, the Cabinet decided to send the teachers back without any resolution to the problem. What we learned from this is that teachers will be allowed to stay on strike from two to 41 days (Kryzanowski 1980, n.p.).

In his view the government should have stayed out of this dispute, and his unhappiness with what occurred seems reflected in the tone of his comments.

In December 1980 the fact-finding commission reported its findings. To a large degree the report confirmed the views of the teachers that working conditions should be improved. In particular, it recommended that the government increase funding to education in order to allow for "an average instructional work-week of 20 hours for each teacher," and "an average ratio of 20 pupils for each on-site school professional (exclusive of school administrators)" (Kratzman, Byrne, and Worth 1980, 48). These recommendations, which vindicated the position of the teachers, were rejected by the government. Dave King said that the financial cost of implementing the recommendations would be enormous, and publicly criticized the report. Labour Minister Les Young also criticized it, claiming that the commission exceeded its mandate (Alberta Report 1981, 33). Needless to say, the ATA was critical of the government for failing to follow the recommendations (Kryzanowski 1981, 31).

Conflict Over Teacher Certification

The Teaching Profession Act establishing the ATA as the official organization representing teachers was passed in 1935, but it wasn't until the following year that the new Social Credit government amended the Act to make membership in the Association compulsory. The ATA was given power to discipline its members for misconduct, but was not given power over teacher training and certification. "In 1939 a Certification Committee was established with members from the Department of Education, the university, and the teachers' organization. In 1944 it received statutary recognition through an order-in-council, becoming the Board of Teacher Education and Certification" (Fisher 1988, 69).

By the late 1960s the ATA was lobbying for a greater role in teacher certification, and shortly thereafter also requesting a role in the evaluation of teacher performance. In 1974 the ATA submitted a proposal to the government along these lines, but opposition from the ASTA prevented the government from acting. In 1975 a government report recommended a greater role for the ATA in the Board of Teacher Education and Certification (BTEC). This was less than what the ATA wanted, but it was still opposed by the ASTA (Fisher 1988, 70-71).

After Dave King became Minister of Education in 1979, efforts were made to write a new Teaching Profession Act. In February 1981, King proposed amendments to the existing Act that would create a separate committee to handle the professional concerns of teachers. The ATA would thus be simply a bargaining organization (Fisher 1988, 73). The ATA strongly opposed this plan, and fought bitterly to have it stopped. "ATA locals beseiged MLAs with warnings of the 'dire consequences' of the proposals," and the ATA threatened a "province-wide teacher walkout" if the plan went ahead. As a result, King decided to shelve the plan but to continue negotiations towards a new Act (Smith 1981, B1). The major concern of the ATA was over appointments to the commission. It was to have 21 members, 11 of whom would be teachers. The ATA wanted to appoint all 11 teachers, whereas King wanted them to be elected by teachers at large (Edmonton Journal 1981, C6).

Although there continued to be some discussion of the issue within the government, little happened until the Keegstra Affair occurred. James Keegstra was a high school teacher in Eckville who was fired for his anti-Semitic teachings. The ATA, as it was obliged to do, defended Keegstra in the hearings that were held during the process of his firing. That did not mean, however, that the ATA endorsed his teaching. Nonetheless, the ATA's actions raised concerns about its ability to deal with the professional aspects of teaching. King wanted to remove Keegstra's teaching certificate in April 1983, but felt hampered by the historical practice of relying on the ATA to recommend that kind of action (Vlieg 1983, B1). In June 1983 he established the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding to investigate issues related to tolerance in Alberta's schools due to the public uproar over Keegstra. The Committee recommended (among other things) a new Teaching Profession Act that would include a 15 member Board of Teacher Standards, 8 of whose members would be elected by teachers (Fisher 1988, 76-78).

THE KEEGSTRA AFFAIR

The Keegstra Affair was a widely publicized scandal. James Keegstra, a social studies teacher in Eckville, had been teaching his students about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, and as part of this he taught that the Holocaust was a hoax. He was eventually fired by the Board from his teaching job, and ultimately convicted of promoting hatred. Perhaps less well remembered is that this incident had consequences for Alberta's school system. Due to the Keegstra incident the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding was created by the government, added incentive was provided the government to undertake changes to the way teachers are certified, and greater pressure was also felt to make curriculum revisions. To the degree that the

Keegstra affair influenced all of these happenings, it could be said to have had long-term consequences on Alberta's education system.

James Keegstra began teaching in Eckville in the late 1960s. By the early 1970s, some parents had complained about his anti-Catholic teachings. Nothing was done about Keegstra's teaching, and some Catholic parents withdrew their children from the school. In 1978, the local superintendant told Keegstra to moderate his statements because parents were complaining about his anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, and anti-Irish teaching. The parents' letters were then filed away, with nothing else done (Schwartz 1986, 12). In December 1981 the superintendent was called by the trustee from Eckville stating that there were concerns about Keegstra's anti-Semitic teachings. Shortly thereafter, a parent from Eckville called the superintendent directly. He investigated the complaint and arranged to have Keegstra attend a school board meeting in February 1982 to consider terminating Keegtra's teaching job. Keegstra attended the meeting with an ATA representative who claimed that the superintendent had overreacted because there had only been one complaint, and it wasn't even a written complaint. Keegstra admitted that he was teaching the Jewish conspiracy theory, but the board decided not to fire him and instead instructed him to stop teaching that theory (David 1983, 19-20).

In October 1982 the superintendent received a verbal and written complaint about Keegstra again. He found that Keegstra had not obeyed the board's order to change his teaching, and so a hearing was set up for December to again consider firing him. At this hearing the ATA representative contended that although there was a new written complaint, it "could be construed to be harassment of Mr. Keegstra by a parent with an axe to grind." He also stressed "the freedom of speech issue." Nevertheless, this time the board decided to fire Keegstra. Again with the ATA's help, Keegstra appealed the decision and a Board of Reference hearing was held in March 1983 (David 1983, 20-21). The decision was upheld.

Keegstra, however, was still a certified teacher and ATA member. In October 1983 the ATA held an internal Discipline Committee hearing at which time it was decided to recommend to the Minister of Education that he lose his certificate. However, "[i]t was only after Keegstra's appeal against the ATA's disciplinary action had been rejected (in April 1984) that the Association could formally request cancellation of his certificate" (Schwartz 1986, 18).

These events reflected badly on the public education system in the Eckville region. There were failures on the part of the school principal, the superintendent, the local school board, and the ATA (Hodgson 1984, 15-17). The ATA, in particular, lost considerable credibility with the public.

> From about the moment Keegstra learned of his dismissal until the Board of Reference hearing concluded at the end of March, Keegstra had the help and financial support of the Alberta Teachers' Association. This touched off a torrent of criticism unprecedented in the recent history of the ATA (Bercuson and Wertheimer 1985, 111).

Indeed, "Some observers accused the ATA of harboring a trade union mentality, giving rise to the view that teachers must be defended to the last and at all costs against their employers" (Bercuson and Wertheimer 1985, 120).

This criticism of the ATA provided an opportunity for Education Minister Dave King to move in areas where he could anticipate ATA resistance because that organization was clearly weakened and on the defensive.

> Although the Department of Education Act of Alberta gives the minister sole authority to revoke a teaching license, King chose to wait for a recommendation from the ATA. It is possible that he was guarding the delegated right of the ATA to recommend a course of action to the minister. But it is also possible that he was waiting to see how long it would take the ATA to act, while the public screamed from the sidelines. This would have been a good way to soften the ATA up for the changes in the education system that King appears to have been considering since 1979. These included: tightening accountability, redesigning curriculum, sharpening up certification and evaluation procedures. The ATA might have been expected to oppose these changes. Whatever the reason for King's waiting, he did not let the ATA off the hook (Bercuson and Wertheimer 1985, 121-122).

In 1985 King admitted that the government had little knowledge of what was really going on in Alberta's classrooms. Afterwards, however, he worked hard to improve accountability in teaching practices and curriculum, some of which has not been supported by the ATA.

> Although there is some evidence that King was contemplating changes to the system of certification and evaluation of Alberta teachers at least as far back as 1979, it is clear that the Keegstra affair provided a major reason for change and the opportunity to speed things up. If the 1970s can be categorized as the decade of "do your own thing" in the classrooms of Alberta, it is clear that the 1980s will be the decade of accountability (Bercuson and Wertheimer 1985, 78-79).

It would not be correct to say that the Keegstra affair changed the direction of Alberta's education policy. However, it would be correct to say that it apparently provided an impetus for changes that were already desired by Dave King. It gave him greater leverage over the ATA in his plans to change the manner of teacher certification and also seemed to add urgency to his desire to make curriculum changes. So it is likely that the Keegstra affair had at least some impact on education policy after 1983. This makes it noteworthy in any discussion of education policy during this period, especially with regards to the ATA. As well, the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding was created due to the Keegstra affair. The Committee generated considerable attention through its discussion papers and reports, and in this sense is also noteworthy.

The Keegstra Affair was a significant event in the ATA's history, but in a very negative way. It weakened the ATA's public credibility, giving the government considerable leverage to take actions opposed by the association without fear of public recrimination. The image of the ATA was notably tarnished since the worst aspects of its union role were highlighted. In spite of this, however, David Flower believed the government did not really take advantage of the ATA's weakness at this time. He believed that the government could have "hammered" the ATA, but in fact, did little. On the other hand, Bernie Keeler thought that King did take advantage of the situation to push through COATS, as will be discussed in the next section.

COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS

In September 1983 King unexpectedly abolished the BTEC. At least one high level ATA official believed King did so in response to the difficulty in decertifying Jim Keegstra. As well, the ATA charged that King was "seeking more control over who can teach in the province's schools" (Howes 1983, B3). That the abolition of the BTEC was quite a shock can be seen from the first lines of a column in the Edmonton Journal praising the move: "Education minister Dave King has stunned the top levels of Alberta's education establishment by abruptly wiping out the provincial certification board. I know of no educator who had an inkling in advance of such drastic surgery" (Martin 1983, B2).

With this move, the Minister of Education took over direct control of the BTEC's responsibilities. Within a few months, both the ATA and ASTA presented proposals for bodies that could replace the BTEC. The Department of Education tried to deal with the issue in the context of rewriting the Teaching Profession Act. In May, 1984, a draft proposal for a new TPA was agreed to by both the Minister and the ATA, but it was stopped by opposition from the ASTA. The Department continued to work on a new Act, but by December 1984 the Minister was convinced that the ATA was not interested in a new Act. The ATA was concerned about the influence of the ASTA in the rewriting of the Act (Fisher 1988, 80-90).

In the Speech from the Throne on March 14, 1985, the government announced its intention to organize "a new Commission of Alberta Teachers . . . to establish and maintain standards for and conditions of teacher certification and discipline" (Alberta Hansard 1985, 3). On March 29, Dave King announced the creation of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) to the Legislature.

> From a teacher's perspective this council will have a significant impact on training, certification, and evaluation. This impact will be achieved by having the council oversee practice reviews and hear appeals therefrom in cases of alleged incompetent practice or misconduct in the practice of the profession. The council will also make recommendations to the minister with respect to the suspension or cancellation of a teacher's certificate (Alberta Hansard 1985, 274).

The ATA immediately spoke out against the Council. Although 6 of the 11 members were to be teachers, only one of the 6 was to be appointed by the ATA. As well, the Minister was to retain the ultimate power to certify and decertify teachers. Nadene Thomas, president of the ATA, accused King of making a "lateral end-run" around the ATA, and added that the way King went about creating the Council was "the most undemocratic thing I've ever heard of" (Lord 1985, B1). Shortly thereafter, Thomas also accused King of political grandstanding to improve his chances of succeeding Lougheed as Premier: "That the announcement should be made on the eve of the Progressive Conservative party's annual convention is the most blatant example of cynical and calculated media manipulation that I have ever witnessed" (Wanagas 1985, 11). She went even further at an ATA news conference, saying that King was out to "destroy the ATA." "In a nutshell, what we are talking about is union busting" (Edmonton Journal 1985b, B8).

Relations between King and the ATA continued to deteriorate. King was invited to attend a special meeting of ATA local presidents dealing with the proposed council. When he arrived at the meeting Thomas told him he was there to listen, not to speak. After a while he asked if he could address the meeting, but his request was denied, so he left (Alberta Hansard 1985, 326). Subsequently, in an effort to gain the support of teachers by by-passing the ATA, King had a letter sent to each of Alberta's 33, 500 teachers explaining the government's position. He also made it clear in the Legislature that the government was going ahead with the Council in spite of the ATA's opposition (Lord and Sibley 1985, B1). As a result, Ray Speaker, an MLA and leader of the Representative party (formed from the surviving remnants of the Social Credit party), referred to King's "pursuit to destroy the Alberta Teachers' Association" (Alberta Hansard 1985, 343).

Still, the conflict between the government and the ATA continued. At this point one Edmonton Journal writer wrote that "King has a full-scale war on his hands that's escalating with alarming rapidity" (Pratt 1985, A8). When the ATA held its annual meeting, King, who had been slated to attend, cancelled his appearance, throwing more gas on the fire by breaking with past practice. Many teachers were angry about this cancellation, but King said it would be pointless to attend after the ATA refused to allow him to speak at the previous meeting of local presidents (Cashman 1985, A1). Later, King said that his dispute with the ATA would probably not be resolved until 1988, which would be the earliest possible time that a new Teaching Profession Act could be adopted. Nadene Thomas agreed that a new TPA was needed to solve the problem, but again complained that the ASTA had too much influence with the government for an appropriate TPA to be written. In her view, the ASTA "wants to see the ATA disappear. They don't want the name to exist, the executive council to exist" (Kondro 1985, A3).

At this point the ATA was conducting information meetings throughout the province for its members, and giving them a document which suggested various "activities as part of their continuing war with Education Minister Dave King." Among the suggestions were mass resignations, work-to-rule, work stoppages, a boycott of Department of Education activities, infiltrating the PC party, and a write-in campaign to demand that King be removed from the education portfolio. Needless to say, King was not impressed (Saloway 1985, 4).

According to King, the real crux of the dispute was over differing views of the professional nature of teaching. As he said in the Legislature:

> In my view, the thing that has prevented agreement has been a significant difference of opinion about whether or not the teaching profession is like all other professions in the province. The Alberta Teachers' Association holds to the point of view that the teaching profession is like all other professions in the province and that

> it should therefore be treated in exactly the same way. The position of the government and others is that the teaching profession is not exactly like other professions.
>
> Particularly, unlike other professions the clients of teachers are exclusively children unable to protect themselves. To cite only one example, the statements of children are given very little weight against the statements of adults in any case where there is conflict. Secondly, unlike other professions the practice of teaching is not subject to very much reliable evaluation, and the outcome is very much delayed. The practice is not easily susceptible to a second or an independent opinion. Third, nobody else goes to a professional because the law tells them they are obliged to do it. If a person were dying of cancer, there is no law that would oblige him or her to go to a doctor. If a person were charged with murder, there is no law that would oblige them to make use of the services of a lawyer. Fourth, unlike other professions this practice is carried on exclusively in a condition of an employee/employer relationship. Fifth, the delivery model is one to many, rather than one on one. Sixth, the range of choice available to people is very narrow.
>
> We think those six reasons justify approaching the development of legislation for teachers in a somewhat different way (Alberta Hansard 1985, 295).

Thus behind the conflict between the government and the ATA was a differing conception about the teaching profession. The ATA saw teachers as a profession in exactly the same way as doctors and lawyers, whereas the government saw teachers in a different light.

The conflict between the government and the ATA was also characterized in a different way, as a struggle to reign in the education establishment.

> What's going on between Dave King and the Alberta Teachers Association is a lot more than meets the eye.
>
> The confrontation between the minister of education and the ATA is a small but crucial battle in the war to decide who will run the province's educational system: the people or the educational establishment. . . . The Honourable Dave King is not a part of that establishment (Martin 1985, 11).

In a similar vein, Roy Farran, himself a former provincial PC cabinet minister, wrote that "Dave King and the government maintain that education is too important to be left to the educators alone" (1985, A8). He also claimed that the government was simply doing what the citizens wanted. "The sudden interest of governments in educational content did not arise from the whim of some politician. It came from public pressure" (1985, A8).

In the midst of the conflict, high level officials of the ATA and the Department of Education began negotiating a compromise. On June 13, 1985, a compromise of sorts was reached. The ATA would appoint one of the 11 members and would withdraw its opposition to the Council. However, according to Nadene Thomas, "the most important aspect of the agreement from the ATA viewpoint was the assurance that the profession would remain under a unitary form of governance" (Fisher 1988, 163). Apparently, the ATA was concerned that King was still moving towards a separation of the professional and bargaining functions of the ATA. Another factor that encouraged the ATA to settle with King was the belief that King would soon be replaced as minister. ATA officials decided to end the conflict with King and try for a better deal under his successor (Fisher 1988, 192-193). In the end, the ATA basically agreed to the Council as King had originally proposed. King was the clear winner in this dispute.

To see the Klein government's later conflict with the ATA as somehow unique would clearly be wrong for the roots were already well established. The dispute between the Association and the Lougheed government recounted above was as bitter a conflict as the government ever had with the ATA. The Klein period, therefore, reflects continuity in this respect, as in others.

THE ATA AND KLEIN'S EDUCATION POLICY CHANGES

Right from the start, the ATA opposed the Klein government's efforts at financial cutbacks and restructuring. When the original plan to cut spending on education by 20 per cent was announced, the ATA decided to undertake a $200,000 advertising campaign to generate public opposition to the plan (Sillars 1993a, 36). On top of the advertising campaign, the ATA held rallies across the province. And some people blamed the ATA for student protests that occurred during school hours (Serres 1993, 7). In fact, one media outlet reported that the ATA was "rapidly emerging as the toughest and most militant opponent of the Klein reforms" (Serres 1993, 6).

Aside from the government's own agenda in education policy, some PC MLAs wanted to reduce the power of the ATA. Backbencher Gary Severtson introduced a private member's bill that would divide the professional and bargaining roles of the ATA (Sillars 1993b, 38). Although the Bill was soundly defeated in the Legislature, the ATA took the threat seriously (Jenkinson 1995c, 54). Some ATA supporters, like Soucek and Pannu, saw this bill as an attempt to deprofessionalize the teaching profession in Alberta. They added that "by splitting up the ranks of teachers into two groups -- professional and bargaining -- the strong anti-union elements in the Progressive Conservative Caucus aim at taking away from teachers their capacity to act as collective workers" (1996, 59). Incidentally, this idea had first been raised by the Lougheed administration in 1976. The government made this suggestion to the ATA itself, but it was rejected (Muir 1976, 4).

One other proposal that fell through had to do with teacher certification. The government proposed that certification would be for a renewable period of five years, rather than for life. Naturally, the ATA strongly opposed this idea. Robertson et al even suggested that there was an implicit political agenda behind this idea: "Given how easy it is to identify teachers opposed to Klein's educational restructuring, the idea of renewable teacher licenses, for example, offers an exquisite opportunity for the Ministry to get rid of the 'trouble-makers'" (1995, 96). In their view too, the ATA was Klein's most formidable opponent: "There is no doubt that for the Klein administration the Alberta Teachers' Association is an eyesore on the otherwise almost blemishless neo-liberal landscape of Alberta politics" (1995, 97).

In the ATA's own publications, opposition to Klein's education policies are quite evident. One column accused the government of desiring to reverse much of what had been achieved for Alberta's public education system, especially with regards to teacher benefits. After listing the "major improvements" that had been made to the education system since the ATA was incorporated, the ATA's Secretary wrote that the Klein government "appears intent on reversing many of these gains" (Buski 1994, 30).

The president of the ATA, Bauni Mackay, was also very critical. In one article she wrote that "Alberta's teachers have become targets for criticism, condemnation and abuse from a menagerie of critics. Teachers have become scapegoats for the economic and social problems slowly strangling this province" (1994b, 31). Later, she accused the government of planning to privatize schools and added that "Alberta is rapidly leading the way into the pit of regression, repression and decimation of our social programs and public institutions as our government slashes and burns its way to privatize, deunionize and deprofessionalize" (1994c, 33). She carried a similar message to a meeting in B.C. where she was quoted as saying, "Privatization, deregulation, deprofessionalization and union busting are all part of the Klein agenda" (Collins 1995, 38).

The November/December 1994 issue of The ATA Magazine was devoted to the topic of "Restructuring Education in Alberta" and contained a number of articles critical of the government's education policy. Another issue that arose shortly thereafter concerned the degree-granting status of a religious college in Edmonton. In the view of the ATA's Secretary, "The recent approval of B.Ed. degree-granting status for King's University College can be viewed as another salvo in the attack on the progress made by this Association in enhancing the status of teaching as a profession" (Buski 1995a, 30). In other words, the government was contributing further to the deprofessionalization of teachers by allowing colleges (as opposed to only universities) to grant Bachelor of Education degrees.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, the ATA opposed most if not all of the education policy changes and cutbacks implemented by the Klein government. Although the conflict was intense, the

ATA and PC government had clashed hard before. While the rhetoric was strong, Bernie Keeler told me that in his view the public confrontation with the government was less intense than that with Dave King. Relations between the ATA and the government were reasonably positive during the Social Credit period and during the first term of the Lougheed administration, but relations began to sour by the end of 1975. While the ATA and the government were not in a continual state of open warfare from then until now, open conflict was relatively common. In this sense the Klein administration's public conflict with the ATA was another instance of continuity with the education policy direction well set during the Lougheed administration.

CHAPTER 7

SCHOOL CHOICE

One of the most controversial aspects of Ralph Klein's education policy was the introduction of charter schools. Indeed, some critics have suggested that this will lead to the end of public education in Alberta. Such an innovation must surely be a radical break from previous policy. But, in fact, it is not. Right from the PCs' first term in power in the early 1970s, they have shown an openness to private and quasi-private alternatives to traditional public education. Charter schools are simply a logical extension of the emphasis on school choice that has been a hallmark of the PCs' education policy. An overview of PC government policy towards educational choice, especially as it has manifested itself in the issue of private schools, proves this point beyond reasonable doubt. This chapter contains a series of specific case studies to demonstrate the continuity of policy in this area through a succession of PC administrations and ministers. Together, the numerous incidents related here provide a complete picture of the government's response to issues of educational choice and demonstrate an overall coherent policy approach.

As a matter of fact, the great difficulty in dealing with this aspect of education policy is in organizing the tremendous amount of information resulting from a multitude of government initiatives in this area. Beginning in the late 1970s and extending through much of the 1980s, issues related to private education were frequently in the public eye. There were a number of pertinent court cases, some government and non-government reports, as well as an eventually successful effort to change the School Act. Much of this was going on at the same time, and many of the events were related in some way. Nevertheless, the events must be recounted separately in order to make sense of them and the impact they had. In the end, it should be quite clear that the events, separately and together, point towards the PC government's support of private and quasi-private alternatives in education.

There seem to be three general periods in Alberta's history with regards to controversy about private schools. The first two decades of the province's history contain a few episodes of conflict between private school supporters and the government. In these conflicts, the government effectively shut down the private schools in question. For the next five decades or so, there was very little controversy about private schools, although by the late 1960s supporters of private schools had convinced the government to aid them financially. By the late 1970s, and especially throughout the 1980s, there was more controversy about private education than at any other period in the province's history.

THE WIEBE CASE AND CATEGORY FOUR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Controversy about private schools (of sorts) apparently played a small role in the first 1905 provincial election. Surprisingly, the Conservative candidate, a Russian Mennonite, won the Rosebud constituency. According to Thomas, this was likely due to the fact that the Liberal government refused to allow the substantial Mennonite population in the area to have their own schools (Thomas 1959, 29).

A few years later, in 1914, a number of private schools operated by a branch of the German-Lutheran Church were forced to close. The School Inspector refused to grant these schools certificates (which would have made the schools legal alternatives to the public schools) because they did not "attain to the standard of efficiency" of the local public schools (Ross 1915, 26). In particular, the Inspector disapprovingly mentioned that these private schools "spent a great part of their time in the instruction of religion and the German language" (Ross 1915, 24). As a result of not receiving a certificate, the church "closed the majority of these institutions" and the children began attending the public schools (Ross 1915, 26).

This was not the last run-in with German Lutherans, however. By 1922 the government was again trying to close one of their uncertificated private schools. This time the dispute went to court. In short, the defendant, Jacob Ulmer, argued that he had a right to have a private school. However, the judges disagreed and he lost his case (Race 1978, 117-119). Although the case was decided in December, the "considerable number of pupils" involved "returned to school before the end of the year" (McEachern 1923, 82).

Interestingly, one of the judges who concurred in the ruling against Ulmer nevertheless criticized the legislative provision that allowed for the prosecution of Ulmer as "tyrannous" ([1923] 19 A.L.R., 43). He discussed how these Germans had come to Canada in search of freedom, only to be disappointed. In his words, "They have exchanged one Caesarism for another" ([1923] 19 A.L.R., 42). Alberta's government was not kind to religious and ethnic based private schools.

Although there were no more court cases along this line until the 1970s, there were some relatively minor conflicts. The Old Colony Mennonites of the La Crete area of Northern Alberta operated their own (apparently unapproved) private schools from the time they settled the area in the mid-1930s until the early 1950s. The superintendant of schools for the relevant school division had not taken any action to set up public schools for the Mennonites because there was a teacher shortage in Alberta at the time. As well, he was aware that many of the Mennonites would be hostile to the public schools. However, in 1951 he moved to hold a vote to establish a school district in the Mennonites' area. The vote was decidedly against the establishment of the district. The following year another attempt was made to set up public schools, but this time efforts were made to placate the Mennonites. A couple of Mennonite ministers were called in to advise the school officials in dealing with the people. As well, a Mennonite was hired to be the first public school teacher. These efforts bore fruit: a public school was opened in 1953 and many Mennonite children attended. However, there was still considerable opposition in the Mennonite community, and it wasn't for a few more years that all the children were attending. As children increasingly attended the public schools, the church-run private schools were closed (Bowen 1995, 61-65). This situation was relatively tranquil compared to the previous situations where the government forcibly closed private schools.

In 1970 the Old Colony Mennonites of Stirling applied for permission to operate a private school. Early in the following year they were granted approval and instructed to use Department of Education Correspondence Courses. The Holdeman Mennonites of Duchess applied for a private school in September 1971 and received approval within a month. They too were to use Alberta Correspondence Courses. However, in March 1974 the Holdemans indicated that they would no longer use the Correspondence Courses because they disagreed on religious grounds with much of the content of the courses. Furthermore, they would no longer employ teachers who had been trained in "worldly" institutions. In August both the Holdeman and Old Colony Mennonites were informed that their schools were no longer approved as correspondence centres. However, the schools remained open, and operated "illegally" although the Department of Education knew about them (Wolfe 1980, 72-73).

In November 1975 the Holdeman Mennonites of Linden applied to have a private school for grades one to nine called the Kneehill Christian School. The following month they were refused approval because three of their proposed teachers were not certificated and the curriculum they planned to use was American. Nevertheless, the Holdemans told the Department in May 1976 that they would open their school in September 1977. At least six other Holdeman communities in Alberta were planning on taking similar action by this time (Wolfe 1980, 74-75).

This situation created problems for the government, the affected school boards, and the ATA. The ATA's concern was with the potential use of uncertified teachers in these schools. The president of the ATA, Halvar Jonson (later the Education Minister in Ralph

Klein's cabinet), wrote to the Minister of Education demanding that he deal with the proposed schools in accordance with the law. The ATA's Executive Secretary, Murray Janpolsky, recommended that the organization's Table Officers ask their lawyers to prepare for legal action (Wolfe 1980, 76, 83). Then in April 1977, the ATA convention "adopted a resolution urging the provincial government and school boards to prevent the establishment of independent schools" (Wolfe 1980, 84).

Apparently, the provincial government was not anxious to pursue legal action against the Holdemans. In June 1977 the lawyers for the ATA wrote to Attorney General Foster demanding that he take action against the proposed schools. He replied that he didn't intend to do so. As a result, it was the Three Hills School District that decided to initiate legal action in September 1977. By the time the case actually came to court in November, however, the Attorney General had taken over prosecution of the case. As well, although all the parents who sent their children to the now operating illegal school were charged, it was decided that only one parent, Elmer Weibe, would be tried as a test case (Wolfe 1980, 85-88).

The Holdeman Mennonites, as pacifists, decided that they could not hire a lawyer since that would be like defending themselves in war. However, one lawyer, William T. Pidruchney, volunteered to defend them as *amicus curiae*, or friend of the court. He was a member of the Alberta Heritage and Cultural Foundation, an organization formed to preserve the province's cultural diversity. As *amicus curiae* his power was less than a defense counsel (St. John's Edmonton Report 1978a, 28).

Wiebe's trial occurred in January 1978. The facts of the case were not in dispute. The Holdemans had applied for permission to open a private school but had been rejected. The building was up to standard and the curriculum met the Alberta requirements to a large degree. The fact that most of the school's teachers were not certified remained an issue. However, since the Minister of Education has the discretionary power to authorize uncertified teachers, he could do so in this case thus enabling the school to be approved. As the relevant legislation was written, the Minister could refuse approval for completely arbitrary reasons and the private school would have no recourse (Bergen 1978, 33-34).

Wiebe was charged with violating the attendance provision of the School Act for not having his children in a school or having a Superintendant of Schools certify that his children were receiving "efficient instruction." Wiebe's defense had three main arguments. First, he argued that he should not be considered to have violated the attendance provision because the Holdemans had taken every necessary step to get approved. Judge Oliver rejected this argument. Second, he argued that the federal government had guaranteed to Mennonite immigrants in 1873 that they could have their own schools. This argument was also rejected because the federal government had no authority in education and because the guarantee was specific to Mennonites in Manitoba. The third argument was that the Alberta Bill of Rights granted freedom of religion, and that teaching his children according to his religious beliefs was an aspect of freedom of religion. Judge Oliver accepted this argument (Bergen 1981, 77-83). According to Levy, this "marked the first time a provincial Bill of Rights had been used to override part of another provincial statute" (1979, 116).

Judge Oliver ruled that Elmer Wiebe was not guilty.

> The accused in this case has committed no real crime. He has not refused to send his child to school, only to a particular school where, among other factors that are abhorrent to his religious beliefs, he says, the teachers are indoctrinated in a liberal value system unacceptable to him or his Church ([1978] 3 W.W.R., 61).

He added that

> where it can be shown in a particular case that religious beliefs are irrefutably and irrevocably linked to education, a foundation has been laid for the application of the Alberta Bill of Rights where freedom to educate children in conformity with those beliefs is infringed upon ([1978] 3 W.W.R., 62).

Thus the attendance provision of the School Act was "rendered inoperative by reason of the Alberta Bill of Rights because it denies to the accused, Elmer Wiebe, freedom of religion, guaranteed by s. 2 of the Alberta Bill of Rights" ([1978] 3 W.W.R., 62).

Issues

The central issue in this dispute differed for each concerned party. For the ATA, teacher certification was the issue. For the school board, money (i.e., provincial grants) was the issue. And for the Holdemans, religious freedom was the main issue.

There were five teachers at the Kneehill Christian School, but only one had a teaching certificate (Levy 1979, 122). The ATA, of course, saw this as a threat to teacher professionalization and perhaps to teacher salaries as well (private school teachers usually work for much lower pay). It therefore, as mentioned, strongly encouraged the government to prosecute the people involved with the Holdeman school. In the cynical words of Saint John's Edmonton Report, "The ATA, its closed shop monopoly on Alberta education clearly imperiled, demanded and brought about the prosecution of the 45 Kneehill parents" (1978b, 33). But as Wolfe points out, "only the A.T.A. saw teacher certification to be the main issue" (1980, 81).

It does not appear that the school board was concerned about teacher certification. However, it had a serious concern of its own. The Holdemans were a large part of the local population, and by removing their children from the public schools, that school lost a significant proportion of its students. Since the public schools receive provincial money based on the number of students enrolled, the Linden public school stood to lose a lot of revenue. The Three Hills School Division Board "anticipated a loss of $120,000 in provincial grants due to decreased enrollment" (Bergen 1981, 76). This, then, appears to be the main motivation for the Board initiating the case against the Holdemans. It couldn't afford the loss of revenue that resulted from the opening of the Kneehill Christian School.

For the Holdemans, the main issue was the preservation of their religion. Before 1977 they had sent their children to the public school. For many years they constituted the majority of the population of Linden, and the programs of the public school reflected their predominant influence. However, new people were moving into the area, and by the mid-1970s the Holdemans were no longer a majority. This led to changes to the school Holdemans saw as unfavourable. At the same time, some Holdeman youth were getting into trouble (such as drinking alcohol), and some blamed this on the influence of the public school. The fact that other Holdeman communities, notably in the United States, were starting their own schools further encouraged the same effort amongst the Linden group (Levy 1979, 120-121).

Thus the Holdemans perceived a negative change in the public school, one that conflicted with their religious beliefs and made a private school necessary.

> [They] outrightly reject the values of the public school curriculum as incompatible, and now they are in a position to act upon their rejection. They deny the claim that the public school curriculum is neutral, if neutrality was ever possible. *What has occurred, they perceive, is that one set of values, at one time religious, has been replaced by a completely new set of values, perhaps also religious in a different sense, but completely incompatible nonetheless* (Theisson and Wilson 1979, 15).

The Holdemans saw their schools as being extensions of their families and religion. "Although they will accept guidance in relation to curriculum, they explicitly reject any assumption of the right of the state or state-certified teachers to exert control over these schools" (Assheton-Smith and Tooley 1979, 87).

Aftermath of the Court Decision

The editorial response to the decision was generally critical. The Calgary Herald called for the government to appeal the ruling (1978, A6). The Albertan carried an editorial that saw the decision as opening the door to the fragmentation of society, with each religious group demanding their own schools, hospitals, and even prisons (Tucker 1978, 8). One editorial in the Edmonton Journal saw the support for parental rights in this decision as possibly making "every child in Alberta the unconscious prisoner of his parents and their beliefs" (Thorsell 1978, A5). Another writer in the same paper said the ruling "cruelly slammed the door of a lightless prison on generations and generations of the people most concerned, the youngsters" (Horton 1978, A5). In his view, the Holdeman children should receive an education that would enable them to leave the Mennonite lifestyle.

The ATA, of course, was unhappy with the decision. It threatened to undo some of that organization's work in professionalizing the entire teaching profession through mandatory certification. "In their numbers resided power, and this judgement offered at least the beginnings of an erosion of that power" (Wolfe 1980, 99). The ATA therefore advised the Minister of Education to appeal the decision.

In the immediate aftermath of the decision, Attorney General Jim Foster said the government would likely appeal it (Smith 1978, A2). However, this was not to happen. Instead of appealing the decision, the government changed the regulations for private schools to include a category of private schools which could use uncertified teachers. These "category four" private schools would also be ineligible for government funding. Category one schools used certified teachers and received funding, category two schools were for handicapped children, and category three schools were language schools that operated outside regular school hours. As well, the government also decided to compensate public school systems which would lose students to a newly formed private school to the tune of 100 per cent of the per pupil grant for the first year and 50 per cent for the following year (Alberta Hansard 1978, 9-10).

A few days after that announcement, NDP leader Grant Notley asked the Premier if the government had considered referring the case to the Supreme Court to see what it would say the implications of the Alberta Bill of Rights were for the School Act. Lougheed responded that the government didn't think that would be necessary and added,

> there was the strong feeling, which I believe is shared by a multitude of members in this Legislature, that the Bill of Rights, being a statute of this province, passed in this Legislature, should not be appealed by this Legislature or this government (Alberta Hansard 1978, 63).

Weeks later Notley was to raise this issue again, arguing that the case should have been referred to the Supreme Court of Alberta (Alberta Hansard 1978, 486). Education Minister Julian Koziak responded, "Why was the matter not referred to a higher court? In fact the matter was referred to a higher court, the highest court in the land, which is here" (Alberta Hansard 1978, 489).

The ATA strongly opposed this move by the government. The executive secretary of the ATA, Bernie Keeler, was quoted as saying that the government was failing to fulfill its responsibility to ensure that Alberta children would be taught by properly qualified teachers (Saint John's Edmonton Report 1978c, 32).

In 1979, the government amended the Department of Education Act to ensure that the category four schools would fit properly within the legislation (Alberta Hansard 1979, 837). Thus the Holdeman Mennonites went from the threat of a lost legal battle to having their concerns accomodated within Alberta's laws.

By creating a new category of private schools, the PC government clearly made a more accomodating environment for private schools in Alberta. It is unlikely that such a result would have occurred under the previous government. First, it was the PC government that enacted the Alberta Bill of Rights as one of its first pieces of legislation. It was on the basis of this statute that the Holdemans won their case. In other words, it was on the basis of a specifically PC piece of legislation that the pro-private school decision was reached. Secondly, there was hesitancy on the part of the government to prosecute the Holdemans. The Attorney General told the ATA that he didn't intend to take action, and only became involved after the local school board had initiated legal action. When the Holdemans won the case, instead of appealing, the government changed the private school regulations and then the relevant legislation to accomodate the decision. This was done in spite of calls from the opposition and media for the government to appeal.

Why would the government take the course of action it did? It seems that the government must have been supportive of parental choice in education, at least to some degree. Wolfe suggests that Julian Koziak had previously wanted to create a laxer category of private schools but needed a chance to do so: "It would appear that the Minister had arrived at a decision [to create category 4 schools] months before the court case was finalized and merely waited for the politically opportune time and circumstances to carry it out safely" (1980, 124). Some evidence confirming this view appeared years later in an interview Koziak granted. In answer to a question about this case, Koziak answered,

> the Linden Mennonite case went to court during my term, and, because it challenged the new Alberta Bill of Rights, we were ready for the decision. Before it came down, I had already been through Cabinet with the regulations for category 4 private schools, just in case. As a result, when the ruling was in favour of the Mennonites, allowing them to educate their own children, we were able to resolve the issue within weeks of the court case by putting in place regulations to legitimize category 4 private schools (in Jamha 1988, 74).

Koziak also discussed why the government had not appealed the decision.

> We did not consider appealing the Linden decision because we had originated the Individual Rights Protection Act and the Alberta Bill of Rights. To have a major test of our legislation followed by an appeal would seem like persecution (in Jamha 1988, 75).

Although these reasons appear rather sterile, there was more to the issue than this. Koziak was himself a strong supporter of private schools.

> I certainly had personal feelings about education, and these resulted in support for multilingual and multicultural programs and support for private schools. I was a product of the separate school system and I thought that it was important that the existing structure should not have a monopoly on education. I believed not only that the separate system had a constitutional right to exist, but that it served the extremely important purpose of ensuring that the public system did not have a monopoly on education. In the same way, I believe that there is a place for alternative education in private schools. There is a fine line between education and propaganda, and I saw private schools as an escape valve for those people who

> were unhappy with the education system (in Jamha 1988, 157).

The fact that the Minister of Education was so favourable to private schools clearly played a role in the government's actions in this case.

Thus this decision by the government created greater opportunities for choice in education. There is a sense in which the government was forced into confronting the private school issue due to the court case against the Holdemans. Therefore it could be argued that the government was compelled to make a choice, and it was only when faced with this problem that it moved in favour of the religious private schools. However, as was mentioned, the government was aware of some unapproved religious schools but did not move against them in any way. So the refusal to appeal the Wiebe decision, and the creation of category 4, appears to be part of a general tendency to favour these schools, especially when seen in light of Koziak's pro-private school comments. Furthermore, the government was already increasing the funding for category 1 schools, and its approval of private education is also seen in that action. This is not to suggest that the PCs came to power with a conscious plan to increase the role of private schools in Alberta. Rather, as they were confronted with issues related to private education, they were predisposed to resolve the issue in a manner favourable to educational choice.

The PC government of the late 1970s was already moving towards greater choice in education. This was a trend that continued up to at least the first Klein administration.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Aside from private schools, Alberta has also had "alternative schools" within the public system. These schools could be termed "quasi-private" because they cater to particular segments of society, rather than the population as a whole. The most significant instances of these alternative schools were in Calgary in the late 1970s and early 1980s (when they were closed down due to intense public opposition) and in Edmonton beginning in 1996, most of which were religious based in both cases. It is not a coincidence that the two periods coincide with the tenure of the PC government since the alternative school concept was an idea of that government. However, many years previous to the 1970s, another form of alternative school had existed in Alberta, exclusively for the Hutterites.

Hutterite Schools

Originally most Hutterite Brethren immigrants to North America settled in the United States. However, by the time the US entered World War One, the atmosphere was not favourable to groups that refused to conform to American society. Thus many Hutterites moved from the US to Alberta where land was still available. Most colonies were able to set up their own school districts and thereby have their own public schools in which their children were taught according to Hutterite beliefs. This upset many people in the province who saw one of the main goals of the public schools to be the assimilation of "foreigners," Hutterites not excepted. This educational and cultural segregation, as well as the continual geographic expansion of the colonies, made the Hutterites very controversial in many parts of rural Alberta. They were seen as a threat to the larger community. However, attempts to assimilate the Hutterites were not successful; they have managed to maintain a strong degree of control over the public schools on their colonies (MacDonald 1976, 12-21). These schools are alternative schools in the sense that they are public schools which cater to a specific religious group, and thus resemble private schools in many ways. But there has been noticeable public opposition to this arrangement. In sum, throughout much of Alberta's history, "the public school has been seen as the means to end the threat and to assimilate the Hutterite. But attempts at assimilation have failed. And though government has recognized the folly of trying to assimilate the Brethren, in areas of rural Alberta the demand for doing exactly that has not lessened" (MacDonald 1976, 21).

In the overall scheme of things, these Hutterite schools are of little importance in Alberta's education system. However, it is still necessary to mention their existence to have a complete picture of the role of alternative schools. The existence of these schools did not lead to a situation where every group that desired its own school would have one. The Hutterite schools were not used as a model for a new way of doing public education by other groups. In a different fashion, however, the alternative school concept did arise in Alberta.

The Development of Alternative Schools

The idea that developed into the alternative school concept in Alberta was the brainchild of the first PC Education Minister, Lou Hyndman. Even before the PC election victory, private school groups had been actively lobbying the Alberta government for grants to their schools. This had "paid off" in 1967 when the Social Credit government agreed to give direct financial support to private schools that met certain criteria, although it was a relatively small amount. Subsequently, the private school groups continued to lobby for an increase in their grants, while groups associated with the public school system (notably the ATA and ASTA) opposed government aid to the private schools (Sloan 1980, 59, 65).

As Education Minister, Lou Hyndman had to deal with the sophisticated lobbying tactics of AISCA (Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta) and ESCE (Edmonton Society for Christian Education), both of which were influential with a number of Edmonton MLAs, as well as the ATA, ASTA, and a number of PC MLAs who were not supportive of increased grants to private schools. Many private schools were desperate for money, and some were even in danger of going under. However, Hyndman could not ignore MLAs who opposed increased funding. As a way out of this bind, Hyndman developed the "umbrella concept" whereby private schools would come under the "umbrella" or control of the public system and thereby receive full government funding. This would also achieve another goal of his which was to make the public system more accomodating to the diverse demands of parents.

> The means by which the Minister chose to address the financial problems faced by the private schools and his perceived need of increased flexibility/choice and parental input in the public system was the umbrella concept. This concept, he felt, provided for increased flexibility while reducing ATA and ASTA opposition. Through this provision, private schools could gain associate membership in a public system thereby acquiring increased financial assistance. In return such schools would have to be open to all students who chose to attend and follow a basic curriculum or work toward the achievement of particular goals. According to Mr. D. King, Member for Edmonton Highlands, the umbrella concept was a compromise between two groups in caucus, one which favoured substantial government support for private education and one which opposed such action (Sloan 1980, 168).

The umbrella concept seemed to be a way to keep both camps happy: it would obtain sufficient funding for the private schools, but at the same time reduce their identity as private schools and make them a *de facto* kind of public school.

There was very little success for the umbrella concept as it was originally conceived. In a number of cases, private schools entered into talks with local public or separate boards, but only one resulted in an agreement that was approved by the Minister of Education. This was between the County of Camrose and Camrose Lutheran College. All of the other discussions failed to reach agreement, or, in one case, the agreement was not approved by the Department of Education. However, one variant of the umbrella concept developed into the alternative school concept (Sloan 1980, 148-149).

In January 1975 the Talmud Torah private school entered into negotiations with the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) in order to attain associate status under the umbrella concept. However, the Superintendant of the EPSB, M.A. Strembitsky, told the Talmud Torah people "that any agreement between a private school authority and his Board would have to be such that the public board would assume ultimate authority over all aspects of the school's operation" (Sloan 1980, 127). Under these terms an agreement was reached between the school and the EPSB, so that the school became an alternative school. As a result of this agreement, the Board of the Talmud Torah school became an advisory committee to the EPSB's administration with regards to the staffing and operation of the school (Sloan 1980, 127-128). Thus the alternative concept came into formal acceptence by the system.

In 1976 the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) adopted a policy that encouraged the creation of alternative schools. Two Jewish private schools, the Calgary Hebrew School and the I.L. Peretz School requested and received status as alternative schools. In the words of the schools' governing societies, "To qualify for Alternative status, we totally reorganized our school, changing teachers, class size, curricula, and many other far-reaching administrative features of our schools" (1984, 3-4). Thus in both Edmonton and Calgary Jewish private schools accomodated themselves to the necessary requirements in order to become alternative schools and thus be fully funded by the government.

It is important to note that legislative changes were necessary in order for the umbrella concept and alternative schools to become a reality. Bill 43, the School Amendment Act, 1975, was introduced and passed in that year to, among other things, make the necessary changes to the School Act. In introducing the Bill for second reading, Julian Koziak noted the following:

> This will permit the type of agreements we've been reading about, Mr. Speaker, wherein schools, particularly in Edmonton and Calgary, that are presently private schools -- through arrangements being made, I think in most cases with the public school board, Mr. Speaker -- are to come under the umbrella of the public school system (Alberta Hansard 1975, 1127).

Thus the alternative school concept was a distinctly PC policy idea, implemented through changes to the Alberta School Act.

Alternative schools, therefore, evolved out of an innovative strategy conceived by Lou Hyndman to satisfy both private and public school supporters. Although his original conception was relatively unsuccessful, leading to only one agreement with a private school, it had this more important result:

> An indirect tangible consequence of the policy was the formal provision for increased diversity in the two largest school districts in the province through the adoption of policies and procedures for the acceptance of alternative programs. Through these provisions private schools have been "taken-over" by these two public school authorities (Sloan 1980, 170).

Again, through the PC government's desire to help private schools and develop more choice and flexibility within the public system, this new concept was developed.

Alternative Schools in Practice

Although the government was happy with the development of alternative schools, they were not well received by some people, especially in Calgary. After a Christian alternative school network was developed in Calgary, a program that proved to be quite popular and grew rapidly, opposition mounted to the point where alternative schools were dropped from the system by school board members who were elected on a platform opposing these schools. Years later, however, with disgruntled parents now having the option of charter schools, the EPSB approved a network of alternative schools that closely resembled the kind that had been abolished in Calgary little more than a decade earlier.

The umbrella concept that led some private schools into becoming alternative schools also led to the establishment of alternative schools that had no previous existence. A group of Protestant parents in Calgary organized the Logos Education Society of Alberta in July 1977 with the intent of founding Protestant-based alternative schools within the Calgary public school system. Their proposal was accepted by the CBE in December 1977, and their first school opened in September 1979 with 300 students (Logos Christian School 1984, 6).

It is important to note that the religiously-based alternative schools, whether Jewish or Christian, were required to "admit students without regard to their religious background" and faith could not be a condition of admission. As well, religious instruction had to be offered only on an optional basis and within specified time limits (Miller 1982, 113). They were, in this respect, like any other public schools.

The Logos Christian School proved to be quite popular. At the beginning of its second year it had 375 students, and within a few months there was a waiting list of 550 children to get into the school. The Logos School Society thus desired to open another school (Fiordo 1981, 74). The stunning growth of the Logos School generated considerable opposition to its existence.

The CBE agreed to allow the Logos Society to expand into another school, and held a public meeting in April 1981 at the Briar Hill Elementary School to see what local residents thought about the prospect of that school being part of the Logos program. About 350 showed up not only to oppose the expansion of the Logos School into Briar Hill, but also to oppose the existence of the Logos School at all. The opponents of this alternative school said it was elitist and benefitted only upper middle class children at the expense of others. Furthermore, they accused it of being a sectarian institution that should have no place in a public system, and said it siphoned off money that should go to the regular public schools. Although the Logos Society decided to look elsewhere for another school building in the wake of this meeting, a conflict had begun which would ultimately lead to the end of the Logos School (Hopkins and Dolphin 1981, 58, 60).

In February 1982 the CBE held a public forum to deal with the issue of alternative schools. About 300 people came out, most of whom were opposed to those schools. One of the most important speakers was the University of Calgary Dean of Law, John McLaren. He suggested that religious alternative schools likely violated the Alberta Bill of Rights and the new Charter of Rights because public money was being directed to religious schools. As well, the Logos School was only hiring Christian teachers, thus discriminating against non-Christians (Geddes and Weatherbe 1982, 35).

With this controversy going on in Calgary, a Protestant group presented a request to the Edmonton Public School Board to open an alternative school. The EPSB decided to reject not only this request, but the concept of religious alternative schools in general. This would not threaten the Talmud Torah school, however, since it could be considered to be a "cultural-linguistic" alternative rather than a religious one. At the same time, Education Minister Dave King spoke in favour of the alternative schools, stating that if school boards wouldn't accomodate divergent views the province would be happy to help new private schools develop (Weatherbe and Wilford 1982, 44-46).

In May 1982 an information meeting was held by the CBE in Brentwood to see if residents would be willing to allow a Logos School in their community. Again, however, the people at the meeting opposed the plan, and it was put off. By this time the Logos School had a waiting list of 1000, but with the setback at Brentwood there would be no new Logos School before September 1983 (McKinley and Weatherbe 1982, 38). When the CBE suggested Balmoral Elementary as a site for a Logos School, opponents went door to door in the local community to generate opposition to the idea. Finally, the Chief Crowfoot Elementary School was found to be acceptable for another Logos program (Hayes 1983, 38).

The fight was far from over, however. In June 1983 a group called Save Public Education (SPE) was created to fight the religious alternative schools through the election of trustees who opposed the alternative concept. The group was spurred to action by the rapid growth of the Logos School. It advocated the traditional public school position that public schools should be places where children of all cultures and religions mix so that they will learn to respect each other. As well, it opposed religious alternative schools as fostering discrimination. However, the Plains Indian Survival School, which had become an alternative school for aboriginal students, was not opposed by SPE since the group considered aboriginals to deserve special treatment as a result of past injuries (McKinley 1983a, 30-32).

In the Calgary school board election campaign of October 1983 the issue of religious alternative schools was front and centre. SPE was very active in the campaign, offering a slate of candidates that pledged to put an end to the Jewish and Logos schools. One of the successful members of the SPE slate was Jon Havelock, later a cabinet minister in the Klein government. Interestingly, Calgary Mayor Ralph Klein was also quoted as opposing the alternative schools (Morton 1983, B1). One SPE election ad in the Calgary Herald summed up the group's argument as follows:

> The Calgary public school board has implemented policies which are segregating children on the basis of religion and race in the public school system. Schools with programs which result in segregation of Jewish, Christian, Muslim or other children should not be funded by public taxpayers, they should be private schools.
>
> Such segregated schooling provides a breeding ground for intolerance and will fragment and ultimately destroy the public school system, all at a cost of many millions of dollars which could be better spent on other programs (SPE 1983, B3).

Of the nine positions on the CBE, SPE candidates won seven, ensuring the end of Board support for alternative schools in the Calgary system (McKinley 1983b, 34).

The new board acted to terminate the contracts of the religious alternative schools as of June 1984. While the Jewish schools were able to switch over to the Calgary Catholic Board of Education and continue operating, the Logos School disappeared (Miller 1986, 283, 287). Thus ended the CBE's experience with religious alternative schools although the Plains Indian School continued as before.

The Reemergence of Religious Alternative Schools in Edmonton

Although in 1982 the Edmonton Public School Board decided not to allow alternative religious schools, it changed its view in the mid-1990s. It seems that the EPSB's change of heart was brought about by the threat of charter schools emerging within its jurisdiction.

After the Klein government announced its intention to allow the creation of charter schools early in 1994, a number of groups began to work towards the formation of such schools for the fall of 1995. When the regulations for the charter schools had not been released by the spring of 1995, some groups feared that it would be too late to open their charter schools in the fall due to the delay. This made the Cogito Charter School Association (CCSA), for example, willing to consider alternative forms of governance. At the same time, the EPSB decided that it would be better to have alternative schools operating under its direction, than to have charter schools, which could be independent of the Board's control. Better to accomodate diverse educational needs within their system, reasoned the board, than to have schools catering to those needs outside of the system (Jenkinson 1995a, 48-49). Thus the Cogito School became an alternative school focusing on "the basics" within the Edmonton Public Schools opening in September 1995 (Jenkinson 1995e, 32).

Also during 1995 a group of Protestants formed the Edmonton Logos Society to request that the EPSB allow it to operate Christian alternative schools within the Edmonton public school system. It held a number of public meetings to generate support among Protestant Christian parents. The Logos Society presented the view that only by allowing Christian alternative schools would the public board be able to prevent larger numbers of children from attending private schools. In this way the alternative religious schools could be seen as a 'prop' to the public system (Jenkinson 1996a, 26-27). Early in January 1996 the EPSB voted 8 to 1 to approve the Logos application, with the new school scheduled to be open in September of that year (Jenkinson 1996b, 42).

Discussion

The alternative school concept grew out of the umbrella concept that was designed to help private schools while accomodating the concerns of opponents of publicly financed private schools. Clearly, it created a greater degree of parental choice in education, at least when school boards were willing to permit these schools. It was an idea hatched and legislated by the PC government in its first few years of existence. Both Julian Koziak and Dave King spoke in favour of the alternative school concept when they were the ministers of education. Although this attempt at creating educational choice seemed to have failed when the Calgary Board of Education closed its religious alternative schools, it reemerged once again when Klein's government introduced another innovation to create choice, charter schools. Thus support for government funded alternative schools has been PC government policy since its first term in office with Lou Hyndman as Minister of Education. Charter schools can easily be seen as a logical extension of the alternative school concept, but given the added strength of being able to circumvent a school board that is unfriendly, such as the experience with alternative schools in Calgary.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Alberta government began providing grants to private schools in 1967. It was in that year that Bill 29 was passed making grants to private schools possible. That bill was passed due to the lobbying of private school supporters. In 1958 the Association of Private Schools and Colleges in Alberta (APSCA) had been formed to represent private schools. It presented a brief to the Cameron Commission that same year, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on Private Schools and Colleges which was created by the Cabinet in December 1958. This gave the group a direct channel through which to influence the government. In 1964 APSCA "submitted a brief to the Cabinet in which a case was made for public funding of private schools and for providing for private school teachers to come under a pension plan similar to the Teachers' Retirement Fund. The latter was achieved in 1965, the former in 1967" (Bergen 1982, 318). While both the ATA and ASTA were opposed to extending funding to private schools, the Alberta Catholic Trustees' Association supported that move (Bergen 1982, 318).

At first, the government grants amounted to only $100 per full-time student in grades one to twelve. The schools that received grants had to have been operating for at least three years, have at least 30 students, and two full-time teachers, where none of the teachers taught more than three grades. The original intent of the grant was to offset the effects of "double taxation," i.e., the situation of parents who send their children to private school. These parents are taxed to support the public system and then must pay on top of that for their own children's education. Beginning in 1969 private schools could also receive a grant of $2 per elementary student for reading materials. In 1970 the per pupil grant was raised to $150, then to $160 in 1972, and $172 in 1973 (Sloan 1980, 60).

In 1974 the method for determining grants to private schools was changed by the PC government. The private school grants were made to be a percentage of the School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF) that the public schools received. For 1974 and 1975 the percentage was 33 1/3. However, the reading materials grant remained the same. Also in 1974 the requirements to receive government grants was loosened. Now a school only needed to be in operation for at least three years (as before) and employ one full-time equivalent teacher for every 25 students enrolled. "In 1976 the per pupil grant was raised to 40 percent of the SFPF grant available to public schools. During the next four years this level was raised to 50, 55, 60 and 65 percent respectively of the per pupil SFPF grant available to public schools" (Sloan 1980, 61). The Lougheed government was increasing grants to the private schools at a consistent pace.

These increases came about largely due to the continued lobbying of the government by private school supporters. The main umbrella group for private schools in the province (which changed the word "private" in its name to "independent" to become the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta, AISCA) lobbied hard to get the government to increase grants. It drafted a proposed bill on private schools that it wanted passed and drew up an Education Manifesto. It presented its materials to the Minister of Education and other MLAs. It was in response to such demands (and concerns about opposition especially from the ATA) that the "umbrella concept" was devised. Various meetings were held between AISCA representatives and Department of Education officials to discuss that concept, but AISCA was skeptical of it. Due to difficulties in implementing umbrella concept agreements with school boards, AISCA continued lobbying for direct provincial grants to private schools (Sloan 1980, 72-81).

The Edmonton Society for Christian Education (ESCE) was one such group that had been unsuccessful in working out an umbrella agreement with its school board. During its negotiations with the board it had kept the Minister of Education informed of developments. But since an agreement was not forthcoming, it submitted a brief to him in 1976 calling for the government to raise the grant to private schools from 40 to 80 percent of the SFPF grant. It also suggested that this could be phased in over a few years. Apparently the idea was accepted because the government began increasing the grant each year and adopted a stated goal of 80 percent as the group requested. It may be worthwhile to note that a number of ESCE people became politically active in support of their MLAs, and that the MLAs supported the group's requests for increased funding (Sloan 1980, 88, 91-92).

It is interesting to note what occurred as a result of the lobbying for increased grants to private schools. First, Minister of Education Lou Hyndman came up with the umbrella concept in hopes of satisfying both the supporters and opponents of funding. Although the concept didn't work out as originally planned, it did lead to the alternative school concept that led to a greater degree of educational choice, at least in Calgary for a while. However, since this concept didn't meet the self-perceived needs of the private schools, they resumed their lobbying efforts for increased grants and were ultimately successful. So instead of the government expanding educational choice in only one manner, through increased grants to private schools, it also expanded it through a policy that led to a new kind of public school, the alternative school. In a sense, then, educational choice was expanded more than originally intended in an attempt to accomodate private school supporters. Yet the policy implications are still clear, namely, that the Lougheed era PC government of the 1970s was supportive of educational choice.

One other form of school financing that would benefit private schools and was discussed in the Legislature was the voucher system. This is where parents would be given vouchers worth the amount of money to educate their children for a year, and the parents could enroll their children in the school that they selected, paying the children's tuition with the vouchers. This would apply to both public and approved private schools. Thus there would be a form of free market in education. The issue was first discussed in the Alberta Legislature in 1972 when a Social Credit MLA, Richard Gruenwald, introduced a motion that the Alberta government set up a committee to see if the voucher system would be feasible in Alberta. He spoke at length in favour of the voucher system, citing its most prominant theorist Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago. He argued that it would give parents greater control over the education of their children, increase the number of educational alternatives, and lead to an improvement in the quality of public schools (Alberta Hansard 1972, 43-29, 43-30, 43-31). The motion did not get anywhere, however.

The issue arose again in the Legislature in April 1981 when Social Credit MLA Walter Buck asked Education Minister Dave King about a proposal from a private school in Sherwood Park to be involved in a pilot project with vouchers. King responded that an experiment with vouchers would require at least one entire school jurisdiction not just one school (Alberta Hansard 1981, 336). When the issue of vouchers was again raised the following month, King expressed some support for the idea.

> With respect to the voucher system, I am personally in favour of an experiment with the voucher system. I would expect the government to support the idea of an experiment with the voucher system. We will not initiate such an experiment. If it is going to be done, it will be done upon the initiative of a local school jurisdiction (Alberta Hansard 1981, 503).

This shows at least a cautious interest in the idea.

A few days later Walter Buck introduced a motion calling on the government to implement a full voucher system in Alberta. He complimented Dave King for being willing to consider the voucher idea. A number of PC MLAs spoke to this motion, but were for the most part opposed (Alberta Hansard 1981, 581-586, 1687-1693). PC MLA Ernie Isley referred to it as "a rather ridiculous motion" (Alberta Hansard 1981, 1687). This motion was not passed.

Although it could be argued that the fact that this motion didn't receive more support from the government shows a lack of commitment to educational choice, that is not very plausible. Over the preceding few years the PC government had made legislative changes that led to the creation of alternative schools, dramatically increased funding for private schools, and created a new category of private schools to aid the establishment of religious private schools. Furthermore, the Minister of Education showed genuine interest in the voucher concept, he just didn't want to be the one to implement the necessary pilot project. In my interview with him, Mr. King suggested that the per pupil funding of private schools already amounted to a partial voucher system. The parent doesn't get as much money going to his child as in the public school, but the sum is still notable.

INCREASED ATTENTION ON PRIVATE SCHOOLS

By the late 1970s there appears to have been a greater public awareness of private schools. During the late 1970s the government was increasing its per pupil grants to the private schools each year. As well, the Holdeman school case and the resulting regulatory changes by the government kept private school issues before the public. The perception that private schools were growing also began to emerge. According to Statistics Canada, enrolment in private schools in Alberta remained consistent from the 1974-75 school year to the 1979-80 school year at 1.3 per cent of total school enrolment. However, it increased every year thereafter until it levelled off in 1986-87, but then began increasing again in 1989-90. From 1.3 per cent of students in 1979-80, private school enrolment increased steadily to 3.0 per cent in 1986-87, more than doubling in seven years (Statistics Canada 1992, 32-33). This dramatic increase helped to draw attention to issues related to private schools.

At the ASTA's 1979 annual convention, that organization adopted a resolution calling for the ASTA to create a Task Force on Private Schools. A letter from Ernest Sehn explaining this move is contained in Bergen (1980). The ASTA wanted the task force "to investigate and report on the development of private schools in the Province of Alberta, their present status and future potential, and their possible effects on the public school system" (Bergen 1980, 83). Clearly the ASTA was beginning to pay more attention to private schools. The Task Force commissioned University of Alberta Education Professor John Bergen to prepare a report on private schools in Alberta, and he completed it in June 1980. He noted that some school boards had experienced a drop in enrolment due to the growth of private schools, and that a number of school boards expected further growth in private school enrolments in their areas (Bergen 1980, 57-59).

The ASTA also passed resolutions requesting "that a thorough examination of private schools in the province be undertaken." At least partly in response to this, in 1983 David King decided to have a government-sponsored report on private schools done by Woods Gordon Management Consultants (Bergen 1987, 295). The study was to look at a variety of issues related to private education and make recommendations to the government on future policy in this area. The report was completed in December 1984. It recommended that private schools be allowed to continue operating in Alberta. However, it recommended that category 4 be abolished. All private schools would need to conform to one of the other three categories. There would be strict control over curriculum and teacher qualifications, but private schools would continue to receive government funds (Woods Gordon 1984, 9, 18, 31-33, 43-44). Thus government control over private schools would be tightened.

In the midst of the public controversy over private schools another report about private schools in Alberta was released, this one sponsored by two private organizations. Generally speaking, this report was a defense of private schools. It recommended "that Independent schools continue to be encouraged and supported in the province of Alberta." More specifically, it called for the government to continue funding private schools and to preserve category 4 as an option for private schools. Aside from its support for the staus quo, it also recommended "that a new system of education be allowed to develop in Alberta based on a concept of freedom, where independent schools may develop creativity and grow in a professional manner under the supportive umbrella of the provincial government" (Ranaghan and New 1985, 111). As it turned out, this report was closer to the government's thinking than even the government's own study conducted by Woods Gordon.

Beginning in the late 1970s, but continuing and even accelerating into the 1980s, private schools became a focus of public attention. Court cases, as well as reports on private education, kept this issue in the public eye, on top of the attention it was receiving due to the development of a new School Act.

THE GHITTER COMMITTEE

One thrust of the government's response to the Keegstra incident (where a public school social studies teacher was found to be teaching about an alleged international Jewish conspiracy) was the creation of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding chaired by former PC MLA Ron Ghitter. It was established in mid-1983 by Minister of Education Dave King, and had eleven other members besides Ghitter, including a government MLA. The main thrust of the Committee's activities was "to review and suggest to the minister of education ways of fostering, in the school system, greater tolerance and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the dignity and worth of all individuals" (ATA News 1983, 3). The Committee was to travel around the province to receive submissions and hear the concerns from groups and individuals interested in this issue. Although it was set up due to a problem in a public school, much of its work focused on private schools.

The Committee's discussion paper on private education was completed in May 1984. The paper was very critical of private religious schools. It noted that "The Committee has received many submissions from Albertans who are very concerned about alternate and private schools, particularly as manifested in religiously based, independent schools with strong fundamentalist philosophies" (Ghitter et al 1984a, 8). The Committee itself shared these concerns: "It is the view of the Committee that private schools, by their very nature, do not adequately meet the spirit and intent of some of the principles set out by the Committee." Furthermore, "There is the danger, however small, that the public education system could become fragmented and eroded by the accelerated growth of the private school system" (Ghitter et al 1984a, 15).

After its discussion of private school issues the paper goes on to recommend changes to the nature of private schools in Alberta. It recommended that category 4 schools be abolished, and that category 1 schools be placed under the jurisdiction of local school boards. They would then be called "alternate schools." These schools would use certified teachers, follow the curriculum of Alberta education and the school board, follow the other policies of the board, as well as a number of other requirements. And yet, these "alternate schools" would only receive 75 per cent of the per pupil grants from the government (Ghitter et al 1984a, 21-22). It is unclear why they would only be partially subsidized by the government seeing as they would be public schools in every other respect. It is also unclear how such schools could be called "private." Finally, the report called for all of the "illegally" operating private schools to be brought into this system (Ghitter et al 1984a, 25).

Of course, that was just a discussion paper. The final report, completed in December 1984, was somewhat milder in its tone. It stated that there was no question as to whether or not private schools would be allowed in Alberta -- of course they would. The choice to send children to a private school "is a parent's right in a democratic, pluralistic society." In short, "There will always be a place in Alberta for private schools" (Ghitter et al 1984b, 111). This was a notable change from the previous report. Nevertheless, the Committee still wanted stricter controls on private schools than existed at the time. Category 4 schools would be abolished. "There is no need to categorize private schools into four categories. They are either approved or not. They will only be approved if they employ certified teachers, and follow a duly evaluated and approved curriculum" (Ghitter et al 1984b, 114). These approved schools would then be eligible for government grants, specifically 75 per cent of the School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF) (Ghitter et al 1984b, 115).

This report also noted the impact of the previous discussion paper on private schools. It had expressed concerns about the more than one dozen unapproved private schools that were opperating at the time. Due to that, and the public debate that ensued, the Minister of Education contacted those schools to demand that they meet the Department requirements. Some closed, some applied for government approval, and a handfull had legal charges laid against them (Ghitter et al 1984b, 104).

Furthermore, the Committee had requested that the Department of Education review the most frequently used private school curricula in Alberta. It believed this was necessary because it had seen private school curricula that it believed was promoting intolerance through referring to non-Christian religions as false. It did not think that curricula of this kind should be allowed in Alberta (Ghitter et al 1984b, 111-112).

In spite of the fact that the final report had toned down its criticism of private schools and moderated its recommendations, many private school supporters were still unhappy with it. One critic of the report was Stockwell Day, secretary-treasurer of the Alberta Association of Independent Church Schools (and later a cabinet minister in the government of Ralph Klein). He said that the Committee's recommendations would give the government "absolute power of what is taught and who can teach it" (Weatherbe 1985, 40). One well-known right-wing editorialist said that "if the committee's proposals for independent education were enacted, they would represent the most oppressive educational legislation ever introduced in English-speaking Canada." Indeed, these proposals amounted to "in sum, propositions of totalitarian implication" (Byfield 1985, 84). The report was thus not well received by many private school supporters.

In response to Ghitter's request for a review of private school curricula to be conducted, Dave King commissioned An Audit of Selected Private School Programs in 1984 to be carried out by Department of Education officials. It reported on five particular curricula, looking at such things as their fit with the Alberta curriculum, educational soundness, and whether or not they promoted tolerance and understanding. It concluded that the curricula reviewed did "not provide adequate coverage of the Alberta Program of Studies." The majority of them were also judged to be educationally unsound. And it was said that they "fell short of the criteria for meeting tolerance and understanding of minority groups and others, particularly with respect to the development of skills of critical thinking" (Alberta Education 1985b, 73-74). In other words the private school curricula did not come off well in this report.

Discussion

With the release of the Ghitter Report and the curricula audit (not to mention the Woods Gordon Report which was also released at this time) there was ample reason for the government to take action to tighten control over private schools if it wanted. Indeed, these reports each seemed to encourage such a move. However, the government continued to deal with the private schools in a much more cautious fashion. And with the rewriting of the School Act (which was at this time underway), the government maintained the option for schools of the category 4 variety, even though two of its own reports, Ghitter and Woods Gordon, had both recommended that such schools be abolished. This seems to indicate, once again, that the government was favourably disposed to private schools.

Although the Ghitter Report had little impact on government policy towards private schools, it would have some consequences for Ghitter's political career. Ghitter became one of the three contenders for the leadership of the PC party in 1985 after Lougheed announced his retirement. The other two contenders were former Education Minister Julian Koziak, and Don Getty, previously a minister in Lougheed's cabinet. A number of evangelical Christians became involved in the delegate selection process for the leadership convention in support of Don Getty. There were two main reasons for their support of Getty. First, Getty had indicated that he was favourable to private schools. And secondly, and perhaps more importantly, as a result of his work with the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, Ghitter was perceived as an enemy of private schools. The evangelicals who became involved contributed to Getty winning delegates in a number of provincial constituencies (Jenish and Elash 1985, 5). Interestingly, one constituency where they were not successful was Lacombe, where the pro-Getty forces were led by Stockwell Day. It was reported that Day "openly admitted he has been campaigning against Ghitter" because of Ghitter's stand on private schools (Kondro 1985, A3).

THE UNREGISTERED PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In spite of the creation of a fourth category of private schools to accomodate religious schools, a number of groups began to, or continued to, operate unapproved private schools. In fact, the Wiebe decision apparently encouraged the opening of unlicensed schools. Religious groups that desired schools now believed they could do so without any threat of successful legal action against them. As well, school boards, which under the School Act were responsible for initiating truancy charges against parents who sent children to these schools, declined to do so for fear of losing, as in the Wiebe case. By the end of 1981, there were 18 of these schools known to be operating. Education Minister Dave King referred to them as "non-approved" or "Category 5" schools (Hop 1982, 164-167).

These unapproved schools were all operated by individual churches. The church leaders held that God had given parents the responsibility to educate their children according to the Bible, and thus the education of their children was a religious activity carried out in the church (Hop 1982, 166). However, there was pressure on the government not to allow the proliferation of unapproved schools.

In an interview in 1981 Dave King discussed two particular ways of dealing with these schools. One would be to change the School Act so that the provincial government could initiate legal action against them without having to wait for school boards to begin the action. The second was to abolish compulsory school attendance so that the parents of the children attending these schools could not be charged. Surprisingly, King favoured this latter idea. After discussing the first option mentioned above, King said the following:

> A second alternative would be to drop or qualify the Compulsory Attendance Law as this would allow parents to educate their children at home or 'elsewhere' without seeking Ministerial approval. This would alleviate the problem of non-approved private schools as they could operate without being in violation of the School Act. Personally, I am leaning towards implementing the second alternative and dropping or qualifying the School Attendance Law (in Hop 1982, 165).

It's not too much to say that this was a rather radical proposal.

King publicly floated this idea early in 1982 after the Throne Speech mentioned that the School Act would be rewritten. It was not well received and King was criticized both by the media and by people connected with the public education system (Sheppard 1982, 41). Abolishing compulsory attendance was one idea that King didn't even attempt to implement.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding's discussion paper on private schools expressed grave concerns over the existence of the unapproved schools. By this time, 1984, there were 26 unlicensed schools, and Dave King responded by contacting the schools to advise them to apply for approval. Even though King was criticized for not acting more strongly against these schools, he continued to move slowly, at times virtually defending the schools by saying that it was premature to say that they were illegal (Philip and Weatherbe 1984, 19-20). By September, only 3 of the 26 schools had failed to cooperate with the government or close down (McCarthy and Teeter 1984, 34). Shortly thereafter, charges were laid against each of the three schools, one of which, Western Baptist Academy, was already in court on other charges (Elash 1984, 42). Of the three, only the case involving Western Baptist Academy proceeded beyond the lower court level.

The experience with the unlicensed schools again demonstrates the government's friendliness to private schools. In spite of persistent pressure from many sources, such as the Ghitter Committee, Dave King took his time in dealing with them. It even seems that he was pressured to ultimately take action against them. The Western Baptist case went all the way to the Supreme Court, but even here, the resolution of the conflict showed willingness on the government's part to be open to alternatives.

The Jones Case

The court action against Western Baptist Academy, known as the "Jones case" because the charges were against the church's pastor, Larry Jones, began in 1983, and the conflict wasn't ultimately settled until 1988. Before that resolution the case had been to the Supreme Court and Jones had spent time in jail.

Larry Jones originally had his children in a public school. However, when a new sex education program was introduced to the Calgary public school system in 1976, he became concerned and decided to withdraw his children from public school. He subsequently became convinced that it was necessary to start a Christian school to fulfill his responsibility as a Christian parent. He persuaded his church to start a school.

Moreover, not only did he see it as necessary to start a Christian school, he also believed it would be wrong to get a license from the government for the school since, as a church school, that would be tantamount to putting his church under the authority of the state. In his view, God required him to educate his children, and he didn't need a license to obey God (Jones 1987, 1, 9, 11).

Jones' lawyer Philip Carr wrote an account of the conflict in 1987. According to him, in March 1983 Jones was charged with aiding truancy under the School Act since he had three school age children who were not attending a government-recognized school. In other words, the children were considered to be truant since they were not in a public or licensed private school. At his first trial Jones was acquitted after a recognized expert in educational testing, who had tested Jones' children, testified that they were receiving efficient instruction. The government appealed, and the case was sent back to the judge who heard the original case. Again he acquitted Jones. Once again on appeal, the case went to the Alberta Court of Appeal where Jones lost. By this time it was 1984. In November of that year the Supreme Court agreed to hear Jones' appeal. Shortly thereafter, however, Jones was slapped with a second charge of operating an illegal school, this being an offense under the Department of Education Act. On this second charge he lost in July 1985, but decided not to appeal, his previous charge still to be considered by the Supreme Court. In October 1986 the Supreme Court announced its decision, and Jones had lost (Carr 1987, 1, 9-11).

Justice La Forest stated clearly a major thrust of the court's reasoning in deciding in favour of the provincial government.

> [T]he province, and indeed the nation, has a compelling interest in the "efficient instruction" of the young. A requirement that a person who gives instruction at home or elsewhere have that instruction certified as being efficient is, in my view, demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. So too, I would think, is a subsidiary requirement that those who wish to give such instruction make application to the appropriate authorities for certification that such instruction complies with provincial standards of efficiency. Such a requirement constitutes a minimal, or as the trial judge put it, peripheral intrusion on religion ([1986] 2 S.C.R.

299).

As far as recourse to the courts was concerned, this was the end of the line for Larry Jones.

Having won the case the government moved on two fronts against Jones. He was once again charged with truancy, and the Attorney General launched a civil suit seeking an injunction to prevent Jones and his church from operating a school. Jones refused to yield, and both cases came to a head early in October 1987, the deadline Jones had been given to comply (Carr 1987, 10-12). Sticking to his principles and still refusing to register his school, and pay the fines for the cases he lost, Jones was put in jail. Although he had been sentenced to 30 days, he only had to serve 10. Nevertheless, "Jail turned Jones into a martyr" (Bercuson 1988, 15). He was not going to give up.

The imprisonment of Jones led to concern among many fundamentalist and evangelical Christians, a segment commonly assumed to be supportive of the PC government. One prominent evangelical leader in Calgary, Allan Hunsperger, warned the government not to ignore this rising concern. The whole conflict was "becoming a major political embarrassment for the provincial government" (Bercuson 1988, 15). In the view of Prof. David Bercuson, a University of Calgary historian, the main issue at stake could be summed up this way:

> In the absence of demonstrated harm to children, should the state insist on ultimate authority over the child? Truancy laws such as Alberta's reflect the notion that adequate schooling can be served up only when certified by the government bureaucrats. In Alberta, state officials not only have the power to set educational standards, they also have the power, exclusive of the courts, to judge whether those standards are being met. This is a clear violation of the principles of natural justice. Any government bureaucracy endowed with this kind of unchallengeable power threatens the individual freedom that a democracy should guarantee (1988, 16).

It was on this basis that Jones apparently received at least some public support.

Having been released from jail Jones went straight back to operating his school, which had remained open under the oversight of other church members. Thus another showdown with the government was imminent. Then in November 1988, just before legal action was again to be taken, the government was able to reach an agreement with Jones to keep his school open without compromising his religious principles. This was made possible by the completion of the new School Act which changed the requirements for registering a private school. At the initiative of Gary Duthler, president of AISCA, a deal was brokered between Deputy Minister Reno Bosetti and Jones (Boras 1988a, A1). The new Minister of Education, Jim Dinning, described the situation this way: "I am encouraged that the new School Act is flexible enough for us to meet our academic obligations to students while recognizing the integrity of Pastor Jones' church as well as the desire of his congregation to operate a private school" (Alberta Education 1988b, 30). In our interview, Dinning said he didn't want to make Jones into a martyr. As well, he wanted to get the Jones case "off the agenda."

Although the agreement pleased both the government and Jones, it was strongly opposed by Liberal education critic Sheldon Chumir. He claimed that the government was violating its own law through this deal since Jones did not have to register as the law stated. In his view, Jones was getting special treatment and was not going to be held to the government's educational standards. Furthermore, he saw the deal as setting a precedent which other private schools may want to follow (Boras 1988b, B8). Clearly, the Jones agreement did not have bipartisan support. The PC government had a different perspective on this issue than the two opposition parties.

Discussion

Of course, it would be possible to see the events surrounding the Jones case as pointing to a government assault on one form of private school, casting doubt on the government's commitment to private education. However, and especially in light of the agreement that was ultimately reached, there is probably a better way of looking at it. Once the case had been initiated by the school board, it was in the government's interest to see the legal process through to the end. If Jones gave up along the way, fine, the problem would disappear. But if he didn't, a Supreme Court decision would make it clear how the new Charter of Rights would apply in this kind of a case. Such a decision would be helpful in the writing of the new School Act which was then underway. I think it's also important to understand the public atmosphere of the mid-1980s. There was controversy about private schools due to their increasing number, the Woods Gordon Report, the Ghitter Committee, and other related events. In such an atmosphere it would probably have been politically unfeasible to let Jones off the hook. People were asking the question, "if I have to obey the law, why doesn't Pastor Jones?" So even if the government was reluctant to act against Jones, I doubt that there was any real choice in the matter. The same would go for his jailing. Having failed to comply with government requirements or pay any of the many fines assessed against him, it would have been extremely difficult for the government to have left it at that. But seeing his continued determination to follow his convictions, it later seemed reasonable to reach an agreement with him and present it to the public as achieving the government's goals under the brand new School Act.

But the government did not have to make an agreement with Jones. It had every legal advantage over him and could have forced the issue, coercively shutting down Western Baptist Academy. It's possible that such a move could have led to a public outcry against the government. But on the other hand, the opposition parties and at least some of the mainstream media would have supported such strong action. In one editorial the Calgary Herald had referred to Jones and his supporters as a bunch of "oddball fanatics who have a masochistic desire to attract attention to themselves for beliefs that are beyond all reason." It also said they were "making a mockery of democracy" and "abusing its privileges" (Calgary Herald 1985b, A4). So the government would have had support in important places for stronger action against Jones.

It is plausible, but not possible to establish, that one reason the government decided to cut a deal with Jones was to avoid alienating evangelical Christians who supported the PCs. Many, in fact, had been active in Don Getty's leadership campaign because he was perceived to be friendly to private Christian schools. And in the wake of the 1986 provincial election, which by Alberta standards went poorly for the PCs, the government could ill afford to offend a core group of supporters.

HOME SCHOOLING

Home schooling has likely been taking place in Alberta throughout the province's history. Students who lived in isolated areas or who were bedridden could take government correspondence courses at home. However, this is quite different from the home school movement that began to emerge in Alberta during the 1980s. People in this movement deliberately want their children to be taught at home. The movement has experienced substantial growth in the province since the early 1980s, and the provincial government has attempted to accomodate this trend as part of its support for educational choice.

The modern home school movement began to emerge in Alberta in the early 1980s. In May 1982 the Department of Education was only aware of three families who had pulled their children out of the public system to teach them at home. However, it was believed other families were illegally home schooling their children unknown to the Department. In order to home school legally parents had to receive permission from the local superintendant. But since conflict with the superintendant was frequently connected to the reason for withdrawing their children, some parents began applying for permission directly from the Department of Education. These were refused. A small group calling itself the Home Schooling Information Service appealed to the Minister of Education to change the regulations so that families desiring to home school wouldn't be at the mercy of the discretionary powers of a superintendant, and instead make it a valid alternative (Wilford 1982, 39-40).

In one case, a family moved from Alberta to the United States because the parents were refused permission to home school their children. The parents were unhappy with their daughter's lack of academic progress in the public school. When they approached the teachers and principals, their concerns were not addressed. Thus they requested permission from their county superintendant to home school the girl using the Alberta Correspondence School material, but he refused. He wrote to the family, "The state, as a means of self-protection, must require all children to be educated at school to be good citizens." Rather than keep their daughter in the school, the family moved to Montana (Orr 1983, 32).

In 1983, after successful lobbying by home school supporters, the Department of Education established $1800 per pupil grants that would be split between an approved home schooling family and its school board. By 1984, about 50 families were legally home schooling in Alberta. However, the legal status of home schooling was still not entirely clear. One family, the Powells, were taken to court for home schooling their two children. Originally the Powells' children attended public school. But they removed them from the school when their son was beaten up and teased because of the family's Rastafarian beliefs and practices. As well, the Powells believed that the public school was teaching materialist values which they opposed (Cohen and McCarthy 1984, 29). They were charged with truancy, but they argued that the requirement that their children attend school violated their freedom of conscience and religion (R. v. Powell [1985] 39 Alta. L.R. (2d) 126-128). The judge did not agree and fined them $20.00 ([1985] 39 Alta. L.R. (2d) 134).

Another case on home schooling at this time (July 1985), R. v. Anderson, was quite different. The parents wanted to withdraw their daughter from the public school because she was having problems there. The superintendant refused to give them permission, and the case went to court. The judge ruled that parents have a right to choose from three forms of education for their children: public school, private school, or home schooling. Thus the superintendant could not refuse his permission in this case since the parents wanted to use the program of the Alberta Correspondence School. As long as a child was using a program of study approved by the Minister of Education, a superintendant could not refuse his permission since the parents have the right to choose which form of education their child would receive. As a result of this case, the Department of Education sent out an "advisory bulletin" to school boards clarifying the place of home schooling in Alberta in light of this decision (ASTA 1986, 5-6).

The increasing presence of home schooling in Alberta prompted the ASTA to set up a Task Force on Home Schooling to study the issue. It was a difficult issue in the sense that the status of home schooling was not entirely clear. The School Act allowed superintendants to legally excuse students from attendance at school if they were receiving "efficient instruction" at home, but "home schooling" itself was not defined in the School Act (ASTA 1986, 22). As well, the guidelines provided to superintendants by the Department of Education were not always helpful. For example, in dealing with what constitutes "efficient instruction," the Task Force report noted that "The present guidelines given to Superintendants are infinitely flexible and result in more questions than answers" (1986, 23). More generally, the report noted the following:

> The law as it relates to home schooling is unsettled. No definitive legislation, no unequivocal statements on the law from the Supreme Court of Canada are available to guide us. It has been necessary to attempt to draw broad conclusions on the law in this area by reliance on legal decisions which are contradictory in their results or are decided on issues peripheral to the central, substantive legal questions (ASTA 1986, 1).

The report recommended that there be legislative change as well as changes in the Department of Education's guidelines on home schooling in order to clarify the position of home schooling in Alberta (ASTA 1986, 31).

The ASTA's magazine, The Trustee, carried an article towards the end of 1986 to make its members aware of home schooling and the problems that some boards were having with it. According to this article, "Although home schooling is not a big educational issue at the moment, it certainly is a worrying one" (Owen 1986, 25).

That article failed to anticipate the stunning growth that home schooling would experience in Alberta. During the 1985-86 school year, 266 students were officially being home schooled (ASTA 1986, 17). The following year, the official number was up to 369, although some home school leaders believed there were another 600 or so being home schooled illegally (Byfield and Slobodian 1987, 26). By the 1988-89 school year, there were 818 registered home schoolers (Hatton 1993, 36). This number grew to 4650 in 1994-95 (Jenkinson 1994c, 33), and then to over 6000.

The government did include home schooling in the new 1988 School Act, the first time it was explicitly dealt with in legislation in Alberta. This was another legislative change by the PC government to create more choice for parents in education. Interestingly, the new School Act "stipulated that home education students must be supervised by a board, but did not specify which school board a parent must choose. Parents are free to choose any school board in the province of Alberta to monitor their program" (Clendening 1996, 35). This gave rise to the phenomenon of the "willing non-resident board" whereby home schoolers could shop around and register with the school board most willing to accomodate their needs. The boards would receive the per pupil grant for each child of $2100 to $2500 (depending on the child's age). Some of the boards would return a portion of this money to the home schoolers. The non-resident provision enabled small rural boards with little money to improve their financial situation by catering to home schoolers outside of their jurisdiction. In 1993 34 per cent of home schoolers were registered with non-resident boards (Hatton 1993, 36-38). Some home schoolers attributed the rapid rise of their movement to the non-residency provision of the new School Act (Jenkinson 1993, 38).

In the spring of 1994 the government announced its intention to change the home education regulations due to the legislative changes the government was making in the School Act. Shortly thereafter, new regulations were released (Clendening 1996, 30-31). This amounted to a tightening of the regulations already in place, mostly through a more thorough registration process (Jenkinson 1994c, 33).

Discussion

Home schooling provides another instance where the PC government made changes to accomodate greater parental choice in education. In this case the changes were legislative and regulatory. As the home schooling movement began to emerge in Alberta, a number of people experienced conflicts with their school boards over this issue. But with the changes made in the School Act of 1988 and the regulations, Alberta was "reputedly more flexible than any other province" (Hatton 1993, 36). This may even have encouraged some of the growth of the movement. Indeed, as Ray Benton-Evans suggests, it is possible to see the growth of home education this way: "rather than Alberta having the largest number of people in Canada wanting to home-school their children, it is legislation and funding that play a critical role in promoting this trend" (1997, 261). And the move toward accomodating home schooling occurred years before the Klein government, once again demonstrating the continuity of school choice as an emphasis in PC education policy since the Lougheed period.

THE NEW SCHOOL ACT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In the Speech from the Throne in March 1982, the PC government already stated its intention to revise the School Act. However, the process to begin the revision was not undertaken for two more years. In February 1984, Minister of Education Dave King announced that a Policy Advisory Committee of PC MLAs would assist him in revising the legislation which was expected to be introduced in the spring 1985 sitting of the

Legislature (ATA News 1984, 1). An Alberta Education "project team" was to be set up to receive briefs and consult educational stakeholders. It would report to the Committee which would then use the information to write the legislation (Orr and Weatherbe 1984, 36).

After receiving over 200 submissions and meeting with 23 stakeholder groups, the Committee released its discussion paper paper entitled Partners in Education: Principles for a New School Act in January 1985. At the news conference held to release the paper, King emphasized the importance of choice in education. He was quoted as saying, "In education we believe that choice is as important as it is in the aisles of Safeway" (ATA News 1985a, 1).

The discussion paper noted that submissions had been received from both supporters of private education, who supported parental rights in education, and the "educational community" which expressed concern about the new School Act recognizing such rights. The paper tried to take a position that recognized parental rights, while emphasizing that they were limited by the competing rights of the province and the children. It also pointed out that the then existing School Act did not recognize parental rights in education at all (Alberta Education 1985a, 33). More specifically, Partners in Education recommended that there be one category of private schools: they would all need to follow an approved Program of Studies and employ teachers deemed qualified by the government. All of these schools would be eligible to receive a per pupil grant from the government. In effect, this amounted to the abolition of category 4 schools (Alberta Education 1985a, 11-12).

Public meetings were held around the province to receive reaction to the proposals in the discussion paper. The proposals related specifically to private education received considerable attention at these meetings. Supporters of the category 4 schools (as well as supporters of unlicensed private schools) angrily made their opposition known. Although category 1 supporters had much less to fear, some were concerned that parental rights were not strongly supported in the document (Henker and Weatherbe 1985, 43-44).

Some public school supporters were upset with the private school proposals but for completely different reasons: they wanted the government to stop funding private schools altogether. This issue was raised at a meeting between Dave King and the chairmen of Alberta's eight largest public school boards that was held to discuss the new School Act. When the board chairmen criticized the government for continuing to fund private schools, King reportedly "lost his cool, and launched into a half-hour tirade in defence of the Lougheed government's long-standing support of private schools" (Davidson 1985, 36). According to Red Deer public school board chairman Robert Schnell, King said that in 20 years "all schools will be private, and that corporations will be operating education programs in this province because there is big money to be made of it." King denied saying that the school system would be privatized, but the conflict over the government's private school funding policy was clear (Davidson 1985, 36).

The president of the ASTA, Ernie Sehn, shared the view of the board chairmen. At the organization's 1985 convention in Calgary, he accused the government of "pandering" to private school supporters. In his view, the private school supporters had "out-shouted the silent majority" in the discussion leading to the new School Act (ATA News 1985b, 3).

Through much of 1985 the issue of funding private schools received the greatest attention in the debate about the new School Act. In the middle of June, Save Public Education (SPE) spent $20,000 on full page ads in eight Alberta daily newspapers (Bergman and Milner 1985, 28). In bold face, the ads read in part,

> WE SHOULD PHASE OUT ALL GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS WHICH SEGREGATE CHILDREN ON THE BASIS OF RACE OR RELIGION AND ARE ELITIST IN NATURE AND DIRECT OUR EFFORTS AND MONEY TO IMPROVING THE PUBLIC SYSTEM. Parents should have a right to

> send their children to private schools, but they should have to pay the cost. Our society is best served by having children go to school together, not by segregation (SPE 1985, A14).

Indeed, the charge that private schools involve segregation was the leading reason for SPE's opposition to government funding. As SPE leader Sheldon Chumir put it, "To us money is of secondary concern -- the social costs we will incur far outweigh any question of dollars and cents. The real point is that we should not be using public money to move us in the direction of a segregated society" (Chumir 1985, 59).

Chumir became involved in the Alberta Liberal Party and at the party's convention in Calgary in February 1986 he introduced a couple of resolutions that the party passed. The first stated that the Alberta Liberals would phase out all funding for private schools, except those that served special needs children. The second proposed that all private schools meet certain minimum requirements. Alberta Liberal leader Nick Taylor stated that his party was "concerned that private schools have been growing too fast" (Brennan 1986, 1). Thus this party's view contrasted strongly to that of the Alberta PC government.

In the provincial election of 1986 Chumir was elected as a Liberal MLA from Calgary. He became the Liberal education critic and continued to emphasize the issue of private school funding. With reference to the decision by the government to fund private schools, Chumir said, "I believe this change is the most important change in education policy in the history of our province" (Alberta Hansard 1986, 885). "The result of this funding has been a tremendous growth in the number of private schools, mainly religious-based, over the last 10 years. . . . This is a formula for future social division" (Alberta Hansard 1986, 886).

The first draft of the proposed new School Act, Bill 59, did not come out until June 1987. By this time, Nancy Betkowski was Minister of Education. She claimed it was based on "unprecedented" public input. With regards to private schools, the government had decided to maintain two different classifications that reflected the category 1 and 4 schools they had implemented in 1978. The equivalent of category 1 was to be called "accredited" and the equivalent of category 4 was to be called "registered." Two classifications were maintained in spite of calls for the abolition of category 4 by the Ghitter Commission and Woods Gordon Report among others. Ghitter was concerned that the registered private schools would be able to get away with using "inadequate and prejudicial" curriculum and be able to employ unqualified teachers. The president of the ATA, Nadene Thomas, believed that the private school provisions would encourage the spread of private schools throughout the province. However, some private school supporters were not happy with Bill 59 either. They were concerned that it gave too much discretion to the Minister in dealing with private schools, a discretion that could ultimately be used against them (Koch 1987, 42-43). Thus, AISCA opposed the Bill for this reason, the ATA opposed the Bill because registered private schools would not have to use certified teachers, and a number of other groups including the ASTA and the Association Canadienne-Francais de l'Alberta opposed it for reasons that had nothing to do with private education. With such opposition, Betkowski decided the Bill needed to be changed and put it on hold until 1988 (Brennan 1987, 3).

With regards to private education, Betkowski was sensitive to the demand for alternatives. In drafting the new legislation, she wrote that Albertans expected "that alternative educational options (such as private schools) will be available." She also noted that parents "have the right to choose the type of education that their children will receive" and that they are "fully within their rights" in choosing private or home schooling (Betkowski 1987, 30-31). Clearly this Minister of Education, and presumably therefore the government she represented, was committed to at least some degree of educational choice.

In early 1988 it appeared that Bill 59 would be reintroduced in the new session of the Legislature. However, opposition to the Bill continued to mount. Most of the opposition was from school boards worried about losing money and power to the provincial government. However, there was also opposition from private school supporters.

> In the Bill 59 fight, the independents have been concentrating on basic principles. First, they say, the act should recognize that the duty and right of parents in the education of their children take precedence over the interest of the state. Second, independent schools must therefore be free to function as genuine alternatives, entitled to curricula that satisfy their own philosophy as well as basic state standards. Third, parents who exercise their right of conscience should not be financially penalized (Ingram and Byfield 1988, 27).

Bill 59 was basically opposed from all sides.

That being the case, Betkowski decided to scrap it and write a new bill. Bill 27 was even more favourable to private education. It recognized parental rights in its preamble by stating: "Parents have a right and responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children." Furthermore, with Ministerial approval the private schools could opperate using uncertified teachers, and more flexibility in the use of curricula was introduced (Byfield 1988, 50-51).

In the legislative debates about this bill the issue of private schools was especially controversial. NDP leader Ray Martin criticized the government's plans for continued funding of private schools saying the government was implementing "what we might classify as a modified voucher system" (Alberta Hansard 1988, 1823). In discussing the support for the Bill from the publisher of Alberta Report, he mentioned an even more threatening scenario: "Now, the minister [of Education] has her ally Mr. Ted Byfield who thinks this is a great thing because it's the end of public education and the start of private education" (Alberta Hansard 1988, 1823).

The Liberals were also strongly opposed to the Bill. Sheldon Chumir in particular hammered away at the issue of private schools. In his view, "the over-all philosophy of this legislation" was "the privatization of schooling" (Alberta Hansard 1988, 2111). In Chumir's view, this was not just another issue among many.

> Members may have noted that I focus a great deal on this particular issue of private schooling. We deal in many issues in this province and in the Legislature.

> However, it's my judgement that there is no single issue we deal with that we have the power of decisions with respect to that will have more impact on our society over the next 50 years than the shape of our school system (Alberta Hansard 1988, 2121).

However, he was unable to stop the bill or make the changes to it that he desired.

Some educators also saw the new School Act as specially favouring private education. Margaret Durnin, the Resource Consultant for the Edmonton Learner Centre, wrote an article very critical of the new Act. In her view, the Act showed that "[t]he government now seems to envisage education as just another commodity, to be placed on the 'open' market" (1988, 104). She saw the Act as including "privatizing sections . . . which will inevitably lead to a two-tiered education system favouring the well-to-do" (1988, 104). Durnin refers to "a clear right-wing move" by the Minister of Education to endorse a bill "that gave both private and home schooling identical status with existing public and separate schools" (1988, 100). In a number of respects,

> the final Act echoes the sentiments of private school supporters. There is an emphasis on the right (and further, the responsibility) of parents to make decisions respecting the education of their children, outside any broader sense of social responsibility. The integrating function which public education so effectively offers to Alberta's diverse population is given much less credence in this new Act, which throws its weight behind an education system responsive to the divisions within this society. The government refused to entertain amendments to give the broader community an interest equal to that of parents in the education of future citizens. They also refused to tighten up the requirements for starting a private school, which stand at a minimum of two families with a combined total of seven children (Durnin 1988, 100).

It was clear to her that the new School Act represented a major gain for supporters of private alternatives to public education. Many themes of her critique of the 1988 School Act would reappear as critiques of charter schools under the Klein government's education restructuring six years later.

Discussion

There can be no doubt that the new School Act adopted by the PC government in 1988 was more favourable to educational choice than any previous piece of legislation in the province's history. Supporters of private education lobbied hard to expand their rights within the new legislation and they were very successful. The attitude of the PC government in this instance was completely different from the opposition Liberals and New Democrats. The PCs consciously chose to expand "educational choice" in the face of the opposition's bitter criticism. Indeed, at least some members of the opposition saw the new School Act as putting the province on the road to the privatization of the education system. This same allegation would again be thrown at the Klein government years later as a result of its 1994 amendments to the School Act. But the Klein changes were just an elaboration of the educational choice options already supported by the previous PC administrations, and the continuity is quite evident.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

One of the most controversial innovations of the Klein government in education was the introduction of charter schools. Charter schools are "autonomous public schools" which "provide innovative or enhanced means of delivering education to improve student learning" (Alberta Education 1996, 1). A group with a particular educational philosophy is granted permission to operate a publicly funded school with a particular focus. Parents who send their children to the school must agree with the focus.

In some sense these schools resemble private schools. They are operated by a private organization rather than a school board and the people who run the school are not elected by local citizens. As well, they don't offer the same educational program as the regular public schools. Thus they are an alternative to the regular public schools, and thereby provide a different choice for parents. This was one of the important reasons for making room for charter schools, i.e., to give parents more options in the education of their children.

The first mention of charter schools in official government documents occurs in the roundtable workbook Meeting The Challenge. In the section entitled "Changing the Delivery of Education" it had a large paragraph on charter schools. It said,

> These schools would be governed by an individual board, composed of teachers and parents, which would approve policy, develop annual budgets, ensure appropriate results, and engage staff. Typically, these schools would offer the basic education program. However, a set of specialized courses and the use of particular teaching methods to help students learn would make each school unique. A Charter School, regardless of the area in which it is located, would be open to all students across the province (Alberta Education 1993, 36).

At this point, however, charter schools were just an idea under discussion.

The government first announced that it would change the legislation to allow for charter schools in January 1994. A physician from Red Deer, Joe Freedman, had been lobbying the government to move in this direction for a few years. As a result, he was referred to as "the driving force behind the province's decision to implement charter schools" (Jenkinson 1994d, 26). However, in my interview with the Minister of Education at the time, Halvar Jonson, he told me that he himself was personally responsible for the decision to allow charter schools. Jim Dinning agreed that Jonson played a crucial role in bringing charter schools to Alberta, when I asked him about this.

In the School Amendment Act, 1994, passed in May of that year, provision was made for charter schools. A charter could be granted to a society, company or corporation which applied for one from a school board, or if rejected by the school board, directly from the Minister. Importantly, the charter school could not charge a fee other than that allowed to a school board, and could "not be affiliated with a religious faith or denomination" (School Amendment Act, 1994, s. 24.3 (4)).

Even with the legislation passed, however, it was not yet possible to apply for a charter until charter school regulations were developed. Draft regulations were released in November 1994 and public reaction was welcomed until the third week of December. However, the final regulations were not released until near the end of April 1995

(Jenkinson 1995b, 37). This created a problem for groups that wanted to apply for charters because their applications had to be in by the middle of May (Jenkinson 1995d, 38). In the meantime, at least one charter school group agreed to operate instead as an alternative school in the Edmonton Public Schools because it believed that there wouldn't be enough time to get set up after the regulations were released (Jenkinson 1995a, 48-49).

In spite of that problem, four charter schools were approved to open in September 1995, although one decided to postpone its opening until 1996 (Jenkinson 1995bb, 32). More were added the following year.

According to the Charter School Handbook issued by the Department of Education, the government saw the charter schools as having five main purposes:

> - to stimulate the development of enhanced and innovative programs within public education;
> - to provide increased opportunities for student learning within public education;
> - to provide parents and students with greater opportunities for choice within the public education system;
> - to provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with enhanced and creative methods of educational instruction, and school structure and management; and,
> - to encourage the establishment of outcomes-based education programs
> (Alberta Education 1996, 5).

Innovation and choice seem to be the key claims in this list.

There was immediate opposition when the government announced its intention to implement charter schools, notwithstanding their assertion of positive purpose. Bauni Mackay, president of the ATA, said the government's intention to allow charter schools was not about improving education. Instead, "It's about deprofessionalizing teachers because they're cheap. It's about breaking the union" (Tanner 1994, A1). The Edmonton Journal was concerned about the possibility that charter schools would "foster the segregation of children. They would divide the motivated, well-behaved students from the lazy, antagonistic students; the rich kids from the poor kids; the super-brains from the slow learners." This would be harmful for the disadvantaged students.

"Charter schools should be tested, and monitored carefully, in a pilot project" that is strictly controlled (Edmonton Journal 1994, A12). Julius Buski, Secretary of the ATA, saw charter schools as the seeds of destruction for public education: "[T]he charter school phenomenon should be worrisome to all who believe in the principle of universal public education. Indeed, charter schools hold the grim prospect of feeding on, and destroying, the very system they promise to 'reform'" (Buski 1995, 30). Similarly, some Alberta-based educational academics saw the government's plan for charter schools to be "a clear step towards the privatization of schooling provision and, alternately, differentiation among schools on the basis of the parents' ability to pay" (Robertson et al 1995, 93).

One result of the new policy on charter schools has been the willingness of some school boards to accept alternative schools within their system. This seems especially to be the case in Edmonton. At least one group hoping to form a charter school, the Cogito Charter School Association, became instead an alternative school under the EPSB. That board prefers that groups desiring special programs be accomodated within its system rather than setting up charter schools. This way the board retains control over staffing and curriculum (Jenkinson 1995a, 48-49). Some people, notably John Ballheim, president of the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, claim that the threat of people opening charter schools prompted the Edmonton Board to be willing to allow more alternative schools under its jurisdiction. In his view, "to the degree that charters remain a threat to the public system, the system will be encouraged to respond to students needs and desires" (Jenkinson 1995b, 37). The possibility of charter schools being formed provides an incentive for school boards to find ways of dealing with discontented people within their jurisdictions. Others share this view. In an interview with an unnamed "representative of Alberta Education," Ray Benton-Evans noted that the department official saw the expansion of alternative programs in Edmonton to be a direct result of the charter school legislation (Benton-Evans 1997, 178).

With this atmosphere prevailing, the Edmonton Logos Society was formed to advocate the creation of Protestant Christian schools within the Edmonton public system. This group argued that the Edmonton board would be able to prevent many parents from withdrawing their children from the system and sending them to private schools if Christian alternative schools were allowed in the system (Jenkinson 1996a, 28). The board approved the Logos proposal by a vote of 8 to 1 in January, 1996, and the Logos school was to be opened in September of that year. The ATA opposed the Logos idea, with one local official claiming that it would be "exclusive and intolerant" (Jenkinson 1996b, 42-43).

It seems likely that provincial policies, especially the creation of charter schools, made the board, and others, more open to accomodating groups of parents with specific concerns. By the end of 1996, Emery Dosdall, superintendant of the Edmonton public system, referring to his system, claimed, "We now offer parents more alternative programs than any other school district in North America, as far as I know" (Byfield 1996, 36). The PC government was a key player in creating this situation. Through legislative and regulatory changes, it had consistently expanded educational choice in Alberta.

CONCLUSION

Clearly charter schools are consistent with the policy direction that the PC government has undertaken since the 1970s. Those schools are not an unusual or radical break with previous policy. Those who claim that charter schools will lead to the end of public education in Alberta should remember that the same charge was thrown at the new School Act of 1988. Indeed, some public education supporters were concerned about the PC government's favourable stance towards private education years before that.

More to the point, the PC government has been favourable to choice in education right from the start. This is not to say that they came to power with an agenda to promote private schools and other alternatives, but that whenever this issue has arisen, in its various forms, the government has come out on the same side of the question. Whether it's alternative schools, private school funding, home schooling, or charter schools, the PC government has made the choice available to those who want them. Both Dave King and Jim Dinning agreed to this assessment in my interviews with them. Thus charter schools are part of a broader framework of openness to alternatives to the traditional form of public education, and should not be seen as a new direction for the Alberta government to take. Indeed, if there is any area where the continuity of PC policy is clear, this is it. Whether one considers official government documents, the statements of education ministers, or the government's critics, there is an unbroken consistency from the 1970s through the 1990s that the Conservative government has smiled on private education and educational choice. In this sense, it is really absurd to see charter schools as a completely novel approach of the Klein government.

CHAPTER 8

SIDESTEPS ALONG THE MAIN COURSE: OBSERVATIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

Again, the thesis being argued here is that the Lougheed government had set the course for PC education policy by the late 1970s, and this central course has continued through the period of the Klein government. Furthermore, it has been argued that it was the efforts of a few key individuals in government who brought this about, demonstrating, to some degree, state autonomy in policy making. Needless to say, some people will not share either of these assertions. Therefore it is important that the most obvious objections to the thesis be discussed. Hence in this chapter, I will look closely at several of these issue areas.

These issue areas are the following: Regarding the specific education policies of the Klein government, it has been argued that the reduction in kindergarten funding demonstrates that the PC government has made a 180 degree turn in this area. The PCs introduced universal government-funded kindergarten, and then they dramatically reduced that funding. It will be shown that this does not provide contrary evidence to the thesis. A 'right-wing' critique of the thesis could be offered by those who believe the implementation of "program continuity" in the late 1980s shows that the PC government was not whole-heartedly committed to strong educational standards and student achievement. However, the Minister of Education later moved to placate the critics of the program, correcting the drift away from the previous policy pattern. On the assertion of state autonomy, it has been argued by others that the PCs were actually just following the flow of popular opinion. In other words, by the late 1970s Albertans were becoming more conservative in their views, and the PCs' aggressive changes in education policy were responses to popular demand. However, the evidence for this view is quite weak. With specific regards to the Klein administration, it has been suggested that many of its policies have been ideologically driven, reflecting the influence of outside sources, notably Sir Roger Douglas and the New Zealand example. These influences were not evident in educational policy change, however. Finally, in Klein's successful attempt to revitalize what seemed to be a dying political machine in the early 1990s, he had to make the party appear changed from that of his predecessor. The party has indeed been changed to some degree, but this change did not affect education policy in any substantive sense.

The first three issues dealt with, that of kindergarten, "program continuity," and society-driven change, provide direct challenges to the thesis, but they are challenges that cannot be sustained. The latter two, the ideological influences and the need to remake the party, do not constitute direct challenges per se, but rather appear somewhat incongruent with it, by implying that the Klein government was quite different from its predecessors. While that might be true in some policy areas, it is not so in education.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

One noticeable change in education policy initiated by the Klein government could possibly be seen as contradicting this thesis: the halving of funding for Early Childhood Services (ECS), also popularly known as kindergarten. It was the PC government that first made kindergarten a universal, government-funded, program in 1973, and 21 years later the government made a drastic cut to shrink the program. This could be interpreted as a change in policy direction from the previous PC administrations.

Indeed, the ATA's official paper, the ATA News, interpreted the cut-back in ECS funding in exactly this way. Its front page article, entitled "Conservatives make then break ECS," looked back to the early 1970s to prove this point. Pointing out that during the 1971 election campaign the PCs promised to introduce a universal kindergarten scheme, which the Social Credit government had refused to do, the article quoted a

Grant MacEwan College instructor as saying the following: "People seem to have forgotten that a key factor in the initial election of the Alberta Conservatives in 1971 was the support of Alberta parents who had lobbied hard for public kindergartens" (Macdonald 1994, 1). The point of the article was to show the irony of the government which instituted a kindergarten policy also being the one to reduce kindergarten funding substantially. Surely this must be seen as a significant policy change!

While it is true that the PCs advocated ECS in contrast to their Social Credit opponents, this issue did not play as major a role in the 1971 election as the ATA News article suggests. The most important scholarly work dealing with the formation of Alberta's ECS policy is a dissertation by Jean Seguin. Citing interviews with three former education ministers and a former deputy minister, Seguin writes, "The kindergarten or early childhood education issue did not appear to be a major one in deciding the outcome of the election" (1977, 117). This same point can be inferred from other literature dealing with the 1971 election (and discussed in chapter 3), none of which mentions the ECS issue. If ECS had been a "key factor" in the 1971 election, as the ATA News article alleges, it is highly unlikely to have escaped the attention of those who have analyzed that election carefully.

Nevertheless, there is still the anomaly of the government that initiated ECS making drastic reductions to that program. This could be construed as directly contradicting the thesis of basic policy continuity from the Lougheed to the Klein period. While it's fair to say that the Klein government's ECS policy doesn't directly support the thesis, it actually doesn't provide much evidence to the contrary either. Had ECS been completely eliminated as a government supported program, the thesis would be contradicted, but that is not what occurred. The Klein government was not "turning back the clock" to the Social Credit policy of basically leaving ECS to the private sector. There was simply a reduction in funding. When viewed in light of other possible areas of financial savings, ECS was easier to sacrifice than other core commitments.

A Brief History of ECS Policy

Alberta was the last province to initiate a universal government funded ECS program. When public pressure began to mount in the mid-1960s for such a program, the Social Credit cabinet refused to implement one, claiming that it would be too expensive. However, in 1969 Robert Clark became Minister of Education, and he was personally a supporter of early childhood education (Seguin 1977, 290-291). Although Clark was unable to overcome opposition to an ECS program in cabinet, he did establish the Minister's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Education. Its purpose was to recommend what the government should do if it decided to fund early childhood programs after the 1971 election, and it had representation from the ATA, ASTA, AFHSA, and the universities. Social Credit lost the election and Lou Hyndman became Minister of Education. Hyndman had been the education critic while the PCs were the Official Opposition, and he had strongly criticized the Social Credit government for not implementing an ECS program. The PCs promised to initiate a program of universal government-funded early childhood education if elected. Many members of the new governing PC caucus believed kindergartens to be "substitute baby sitting services," but Hyndman was still able to persuade his colleagues to initiate an early childhood program. The Committee created by the previous government then acted as an advisory panel as the government planned its policy. In March, 1973, the Early Childhood Services Branch of the Department of Education was established to implement the government's plans in this area (Wisniewski 1989, 39, 49, 55-57).

It is not unreasonable, then, to see ECS as a specifically PC policy in contrast to the previous government. It continued to be, and remains today, a part of the government's education policy. In this light, the reduction in the number of kindergarten hours funded by the Klein government should not be seen as a first step towards the elimination of a provincial kindergarten policy. It certainly reduced the program, but did not constitute a turning away from an ECS program per se. The government believed there was need to cut overall funding, and ECS was an easier target than grades 1 to 12 both because it was optional, rather than compulsory, and because the educational impact would affect fewer pupils.

During the 1993 roundtables on education, ECS was one of the programs that was discussed by the participants. They were divided over the importance of it. The booklet summarizing the results of the education roundtables put it this way:

> ECS was a frequent topic of discussion. A few groups definitely felt ECS was essential, while others saw it as optional. Some participants questioned the academic value of ECS, while others felt it was basic because it could reduce the need for later interventions. A few groups suggested the need for alternative, cost-effective means of delivery of ECS (Alberta Education 1993b, 7).

Reducing the number of kindergarten hours funded by the government could be seen as a compromise position: maintaining an ECS program as ECS supporters desired, while making savings in this area as ECS opponents desired.

Furthermore, the number of hours of kindergarten funded each year (originally cut from 400 hours to 200 hours by the Klein government, but then increased to 240 hours) is a rather arbitrary decision. The 400 hour standard had not been demonstrated to be of particular value. As Reno Bosetti told the Edmonton Journal regarding the number of hours, "the whole thing is a judgement call." He added, "I don't even know where the 400 hours came from. There was no more basis for the 400 than there is for the 200." In short, "there is no conclusive evidence as to what's best" (Schuler 1994a, A10). When challenged on the research basis for reducing the number of kindergarten hours Minister of Education Halvar Jonson noted that the studies on kindergarten are "not conclusive -- they are all over the map." The decision to cut the number of hours was done for financial reasons: "It boils down to the government having to make a decision on priorities and the allocation of funds" (Schuler 1994b, A8). So the reduction of hours was not part of a government plan to move in a different direction in this policy area.

Rather, it was simply easier to cut this program than to make savings in other areas. ECS had a lower priority than other education programs.

In sum, then, it should be clear that the reduction in ECS funding does not contradict the thesis of basic policy continuity from the Lougheed period to the Klein period. While the Klein government made a drastic reduction in the number of kindergarten hours it would fund, it did not turn against kindergarten as such. The government was not out to "break" ECS as had been alleged in the ATA News.

"PROGRAM CONTINUITY" AS A POSSIBLE DEVIATION

The PC government initiated a program of universal government-funded early childhood education in 1973. The philosophy of child development that underlay this program was to be somewhat different from the philosophy that underlay elementary education. As a result, when children went from kindergarten into grade one, rather than having a consistent educational experience, they would be introduced to different educational practices in their new classrooms than they had so far encountered. In order to make kindergarten and elementary education more consistent, the Early Childhood Services Branch of Alberta Education was merged with the Elementary Education Branch in 1987. The following year, Minister of Education Nancy Betkowski issued a policy statement on this effort to provide educational continuity called Education Program Continuity: A Policy Statement on the Articulation of Children's Learning Experiences (Alberta Education 1988a). This document stated that by August 31, 1993, all school boards, as well as Category 1 and 2 private schools, would be required to have implemented "program continuity" from ECS through grade six (Alberta Education 1988a, 14).

Shortly after Jim Dinning became Minister of Education, 'right-wing' education critics created a public controversy over this program by claiming it undermined student achievement. At first, Dinning supported the inherited policy, but then changed his mind and put it "indefinitely on hold" in December, 1992, because he was not happy with the results of program continuity. In his mind, it was not enhancing student achievement (Hatton 1992, 31). During our interview, Dinning said he changed his mind about the policy and cancelled it because no one could properly answer his questions about program continuity. This cancellation served to protect the emphasis on student achievement that had been inherited from the Lougheed period, maintaining a consistent policy direction. Thus this controversy, rather than providing evidence contrary to the thesis, reinforces its argument instead.

WERE THE EDUCATION POLICY CHANGES SOCIETY-DRIVEN?

In my interview with Robert Clark, the last Education Minister for the Social Credit government, he disputed the view that the PCs had a different philosophy of education than Social Credit. He recognized that by the late 1970s and early 1980s there had been a change in the direction of education policy -- he called it "a swing to the right." However, his view is that this change in the government's education policy was simply a reflection of a change in society's view of education (and many other things). As the general view of society changed, the government followed suit. In other words, Clark argued that the population at large was moving to the right by the late 1970s and the kinds of changes initiated by the government in the area of education were therefore society-driven. Thus the changes were not part of a unique PC program or philosophy. In fact, if Social Credit had remained in power it would likely have moved in a similar direction.

There are scholars who agree with Clark that there was a shift to the right in the late 1970s and early 1980s. None of the work in this area focuses on Alberta, however. Instead, the emphasis is on charting a shift to the right that has occurred in all of the Anglo-American democracies, or more generally, a shift that has had an impact on many of the countries in the West. Since Alberta is a province in one of the countries that has been touched by this move to the right, it is plausible to argue that such a shift did occur in Alberta as Clark suggested. That being the case, it is also possible that the changing direction of education policy under the Lougheed Conservatives was a response to public pressure instead of an agenda held by people in the government itself.

The evidence, however, does not support this contention. That is, the evidence does not indicate that Alberta's population shifted to the right in the late 1970s leading directly to a change in education policy. There just isn't any way to substantiate the view that the Lougheed government's education policy was society-driven, especially in light of the counter evidence. While there is empirical evidence of widespread right-wing views among Alberta's population during the Klein period, it is not plausible to read this back into Alberta politics 10 or 15 years previously and then to use it to explain changes in education policy. In fact, the same survey that showed widespread support for Klein's government and its policies generally, also showed modest opposition to aspects of his education policy, notably charter schools and the reduction in kindergarten funding (Archer and Gibbins 1997, 467).

Some work has been done in tracing and describing the perceived shift to the right in at least some Western countries. Two terms frequently associated with this phenomenon are the "new right" and "neoconservatism." Generally speaking, it is the rise to power of Ronald Reagan in the US, Margaret Thatcher in the UK, and to a lesser extent, Brian Mulroney in Canada, that provides the *prima facie* evidence for a change in the views of the populations in these Anglo-American democracies. "It is the repeated electoral success of parties promoting similar kinds of policies that suggests a collective 'shift to the right'" (Nevitte and Gibbins 1990, 21). It's not just the electoral success that provides support for this view, however. Other scholars have noted a change in the character of public debate which appears to support the view that there has been a move to the right.

> In short, the terms of and participants in public political debate have changed drastically since the mid-1970s. Although we grant that the three countries [i.e., US, UK, and Canada] differ in the degree to which such a conservative resurgence has occurred, we believe that each shares these general attributes sufficiently to suggest a convergence in a conservative resurgence (Smith, Kornberg, and Nevitte 1988, 36).

Thus at least some political scientists are persuaded that a shift to the right has occurred, as Clark suggested.

To argue that there has been a general shift to the right in Canada still seems rather vague as a way to explain a change in specific policy direction. However, Pitsula and Rasmussen (1990) in their extensive study of the effect of the "new right" on Saskatchewan, reveal in some detail how policy was affected. Although they don't discuss education policy at all (a very significant omission for a study of provincial policy), they do comment on the influence of the new right in Canada. Importantly, they suggest that it has had its greatest impact on provincial governments.

> Since the late 1970s the new right has been a force to be reckoned with in the United States, Great Britain, and elsewhere. In Canada, too, the impact has been felt. Although the Mulroney government has displayed many of the symptoms, the most extreme manifestations have occurred at the provincial level. The spearheads of the new right in Canada have been Bill Vander Zalm's British Columbia and Grant Devine's Saskatchewan (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 1).

Although the Lougheed government in Alberta is not directly mentioned, it could still be argued that it was affected by the rightward swing. In 1982 the Lougheed government was "startled" by the rapid growth of the Western Canada Concept, a separatist party that severely criticized the government from the right. There is evidence that the government moved somewhat to the right to shore up its support on that flank. Although the WCC received almost 12 per cent of the popular vote in the 1982 provincial election, the PCs still won a massive majority.

> The election, however, marked a turning point in provincial economic policy. The government, stung by comments from large and small capital and from farmers that the public sector enjoyed a privileged position while they suffered, began to cut back the size of the public sector. Budgetary expenditures slowed dramatically from 1983 onwards. In 1984, as a sign that it was serious about reducing the

> presence of the government in the private sector, the government privatized Pacific Western Airlines – an omen of what was to come in the late 80s and early 90s (Smith 1992, 256).

There were conflicting signals, however, since the government also issued a White Paper in 1984 advocating continued intervention in the economy. Yet there still seemed to be some change in the government's posture (Smith 1992, 256).

Thus far there seems to be some credence to the view of Robert Clark that there was a politically significant shift to the right provincially in the late 70s and early 1980s. There is also some evidence that it may have affected the policies of the Lougheed government broadly. However, there is enough counter-evidence to render it insufficient as an explanation for educational policy change in Alberta.

For one, although there is plenty of anecdotal evidence for a shift to the right, "remarkably little systematic evidence has been produced that gives credence to the claim" (Mishler, Hoskin, and Fitzgerald 1988, 57). Thus there is an absence of hard evidence for a shift to the right. Without going into details, Mishler, Hoskin, and Fitzgerald carried out a systematic analysis of electoral data from the US, UK, and Canada from the 1960s to the 1980s. Their study did not reveal any evidence for a rightward swing in the populations of those three countries. "Analysis of trends in public support for conservative parties since 1964 suggests the much-heralded resurgence of conservatism is largely myth" (Mishler, Hoskin, and Fitzgerald 1988, 85). The very least that can be said, then, is that the view that there has been a policy-sensitive shift to the right is debatable.

In specific reference to Alberta, there has also been a challenge to this view. Roger Gibbins, who refers in 1985 to the Alberta PCs' as a "party of the moderate centre," argued that the Lougheed government had not been moving to the right in the early 1980s. In discussing the federal PCs electoral victory of 1984, he notes that "[i]t is by no means clear" that "a neoconservative tide" would materialize (1985, 130). This implies, of course, that he does not see such a tide to have been present in Canada in general, or Alberta in particular.

> Here it is interesting to note that during 1984 the Lougheed government did not move in any significant measure towards the right. Although it is often seen as a conservative government relative to the Canadian norm, and indeed frequently cloaks itself in just such terms, the Lougheed government has not followed the precedents set by the Social Credit government in British Columbia (Gibbins 1985, 130).

In short, "If there is a neo-conservative tide sweeping or about to sweep the country, the Alberta government is by no means in the vanguard" (Gibbins 1985, 131). There is reason to doubt that the Lougheed government was moving to the right by the late 1970s or early 1980s, so such a move could not explain the education policy initiatives of that period.

While it is plausible that there was a shift to the right in the three Anglo-American countries that were mentioned, it is certainly not conclusive. An explanation for policy change in Alberta in the late 1970s and early 1980s that relied exclusively on a supposed shift to the right in the populace would be very shaky indeed. Even if there were a shift to the right most of the evidence is circumstantial. And it would be virtually impossible to show a direct linkage between that shift and the policy decisions made for education. So this does not appear to be a fruitful line of research or a satisfactory explanation.

Nevertheless, this is not to assert that a change in the general political climate was not necessary for the rise of the Klein Conservatives. Certainly the thrust of his government, i.e., drastically reducing the size of government, was unprecedented in terms of the severity of the rhetoric and actual policies. There must have been some change in Alberta to allow for this. But this change cannot be read backwards into Alberta 10 or 15 years earlier and used as an explanation for education policy change in that period. Indeed, it would be difficult to use it even to explain Klein's education policy changes.

In a survey of Alberta residents conducted in April and May 1995, Archer and Gibbins found over 80 per cent support for the government's goal of deficit elimination. The degree of support varied, of course, but the goal was generally supported, and spending reductions were also viewed as being the best way to achieve it. As these scholars conclude, "In ideological terms, most Albertans are neo-conservatives who find themselves in agreement with the broad outlines of the Klein agenda. They may be neo-conservatives of varying hues, but they are neo-conservatives none the less" (Archer and Gibbins 1997, 470). Regarding specific policy initiatives, they found widespread support for stronger parent councils and fewer school boards (82 per cent and 74 per cent respectively), but over 56 per cent opposed to reduced kindergarten funding and a plurality (42 per cent to 39 per cent) opposed to the creation of charter schools (Archer and Gibbins 1997, 467). Thus while there may have been a "shift to the right" that helps to account for the support for Klein, this cannot be used in any meaningful way to explain the direction of education policy.

IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON THE KLEIN AGENDA

A number of commentators have discussed the impact of influences from outside Alberta on the Klein agenda. These influences did not take the form of blackmail by international creditors, but rather ideas from non-Canadian sources on how to improve the performance of government in a situation of fiscal limitations. While there was serious concern about Alberta's deficit and the need to deal with it before these influences appeared, they likely helped the government to articulate its actions and perhaps contributed to some of the government's tactics. Interestingly, three of the most commonly cited books that influenced the government contained discussions on changes that were necessary for public education systems. That being the case, the possibility that the education policy changes undertaken by Klein's government had received their impetus from the recommendations contained in these books needs to be evaluated. Even Barry Cooper, who is somewhat skeptical about the influence of books on the actions of politicians, believes that at least two books had a role in defining Klein's policies.

> Even though books influenced the Klein agenda much less than experience, the arguments of two of them, *Reinventing Government* . . . and Roger Douglas' New Zealand memoir, *Unfinished Business*, should be mentioned. These two books articulated strategies that the Klein Government worked out in the heat of political struggle. They provide a clear account of the *logic* of the changes undertaken by the Klein Government, not a detailed policy wish-list. Whether the Premier ever read either one is beside the point (Cooper 1995, 64).

The most commonly recognized outside influence on the Alberta government's restructuring strategy was Sir Roger Douglas, a former finance minister from New Zealand. Ironically, Douglas had been with New Zealand's Labour Party, the major social democratic party in that country. When New Zealand's government found itself in a financial crisis in the early 1980s, Douglas, as finance minister, implemented significant spending reductions and restructuring that decreased the role of government in the country. By the early 1990s Douglas was an international consultant on government restructuring, and he had written a book advocating his views entitled Unfinished Business. Mark Lisac notes that Douglas was brought to Alberta by Klein's people to promote his ideas. "They bought scores of copies of his book *Unfinished Business* to hand out to senior civil service managers. They even videotaped one of his talks to show around the government" (1995, 207). Laxer also refers to Douglas' presence in the province, and suggests that certain principles from his book, notably pushing through a policy agenda quickly without any hesitation, were "taken to heart" by the Klein government (1995, 104).

Although Dabbs refers to Unfinished Business as "less influential" than the two other books he mentions, he nevertheless points out the apparent contribution that Douglas made to the Alberta government's policy. Douglas came to Alberta in 1993. "He met the new Klein caucus and accumulated a great deal of credit for his influence on

Alberta's strategies, although he had no consulting role" (Dabbs 1997, 110). Refering to Unfinished Business Dabbs notes,

> Klein adopted one of the book's sound bites: "Don't blink." Douglas's persuasive writing also helped explain the Tory agenda to some important opinion leaders, and he was the toast of the Conservative party's [1993] annual policy convention, held in the mountain resort of Banff, at a cocktail reception that featured mugs of Kleineken beer hoisted to acknowledge Sir Roger's contribution to the debate in Alberta (1997, 110-111).

Apparently Douglas had some influence on the government of Ralph Klein.

Another book that commentators have cited as influencing the Alberta government is Reinventing Government by two American writers, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. The main thrust of this book is to promote the restructuring of government to make it more efficient and user-friendly. Laxer says it was "reportedly a sort of bible for cabinet ministers," although in his view this book and others were "more justifications and models for directions the Klein government already [wanted] to go in than the cause of the government's break from Social Credit and Lougheed traditions" (1995, 104). Dabbs says that "several opinion leaders, including cabinet ministers Dick Johnston and Elaine McCoy" circulated copies of Reinventing Government, a "book that had captured Ralph's intuitive and unpredictable politics in a neat, tidy package" (1997, 110). This book also seems to have had some influence on the Klein government.

Dabbs claims that in early 1993 "Three books were helping to shape Klein's reelection strategy," the two previously mentioned books, as well as a third, Tyranny of the Status Quo by Milton and Rose Friedman. This book was actively promoted by a prominent oilman, Jim Gray of Canadian Hunter Exploration. He gave out "cartons" of this book, and sent a copy "to every Alberta cabinet minister." It discussed how conservative governments should reduce the size and cost of government, emphasizing the need to move decisively and quickly early in the government's mandate (Dabbs 1997, 109).

All three of these books have discussions on the need to reform public education and the way it should be done. Roger Douglas claims that education expenditures in New Zealand have been going up, while the quality of education has been going down. In his view, policy changes need to be made to raise the level of student achievement. "A large part of the answer, and central to what I propose, lies in removing government as an intermediary between parents and students and educational institutions" (Douglas 1993, 90). This kind of thinking can be seen in Klein's education policy, namely through reducing the role of school boards. In particular, the Klein government increased the role and power of school councils (at least for a while), giving school councils a greater part in governance at the expense of school boards. Active school councils do bring parents much more closely into direct contact with the schools as Douglas recommended. Douglas goes further, though, in emphasizing the role of choice in bringing about needed changes in the education system. In his view, choice is the "key" to the necessary educational reforms.

> Choice links consumer and provider directly, with consequential incentives on schools. Parents can use 'exit' (moving their children from schools that are not producing good results) as well as choice to encourage high performance. Schools are then held accountable by the people who use them, not controlled from above by bureaucrats. Everything else flows from this point (Douglas 1993, 93).

Choice was also an emphasis in the Klein education policy changes, especially evident with the controversial introduction of charter schools. By allowing people to set up independent public schools (as charter schools are deemed to be), parents have a greater choice in selecting the type of school and education their children receive. Again, there is clear commonality between the educational reforms recommended by Roger Douglas and the kinds of policies implemented by the Klein government.

The proposals for education reform offered by Osborne and Gaebler are quite similar to those of Roger Douglas. They believe that changes are necessary for the public education system, and that the way to bring about the kinds of changes they see as necessary is to introduce competition into the system. In their view, "only competition can motivate *all* schools to improve -- because only competition for customers creates real consequences and real pressure for change when schools fail" (1992, 96). Their basic proposal is to have all public schools run as charter schools. They would not be operated by school boards, but organizations set up specifically to operate each school. As well, the government would measure and publicize the achievement results of the schools, thus providing parents with the information they would need to make informed decisions about where to send their children (1992, 316). "Together, these changes would create a system in which parents could choose what they wanted for their children and schools would have no alternative to provide it, if they wanted to survive" (Osborne and Gaebler 1992, 318). Choice in education would lead to competition between schools thus creating overall improvement in the education system.

The Friedmans' book advocates the same theme for education reform as the other two books, as well as recommending that governments move fast with their agenda, as Douglas advises. Using the first Reagan Administration as their main example, the Friedmans argue that a new government only has about 6 to 9 months to push through an ambitious policy of change, because after that short period the "tyranny of the status quo" reasserts itself with vested interests successfully fighting back. "The temporarily routed political forces regroup, and they tend to mobilize everyone who was adversely affected by the changes, while the proponents of the changes tend to relax after their initial victories" (Friedman and Friedman 1984, 3). The chapter on education policy, like the two other books, advocates educational choice and competition. In their view, the quality of public education has been declining due to the "socialist" organization of the school system. "We believe that introducing competition can alone lead to a major improvement in the quality of schooling available to all strata in our society" (Friedman and Friedman 1984, 163). That competition can only be achieved through educational choice.

Again, the idea that choice in education would lead to an improved system was part of the Klein government's rationale for introducing charter schools. Thus, at least in a general way, Klein's education policy can be said to reflect the thinking of Douglas, Osborne and Gaebler as well as the Friedmans. Since all three books discussed are recognized as having had an influence on the Klein government, and since that government initiated education policies that reflected the recommendations for education systems contained in these books, it is initially plausible that they influenced the direction of Klein's education policy. Could this be so? No. Aside from the similarity between the ideas in the books and the policies of the Klein government, there is no other linkage. More importantly, the education policies of the Klein government were strongly situated in the policies of previous PC administrations and were consistent with them. In other words, policies such as strengthening school councils and introducing charter schools are an extension of previous policies rather than being the result of ideological influences such as the books discussed above. Marketting and tactics may have been affected by the books; the broad strategy remained consistently in place.

THE CHANGING ELECTORAL FORTUNES OF THE ALBERTA PCs

Before Peter Lougheed became its leader, the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party had been a relatively minor player in the province's politics. But in 1966 Lougheed became the leader and immediately began rebuilding the party. In the 1967 provincial election, the PCs won six seats and became the official opposition. Then in the following election, they were elected to government, defeating Social Credit. However, in popular vote share they were only 5 percentage points ahead of Social Credit. The new PC government initiated an aggressive "Alberta first" policy of developing the province's economy. This activity, combined with the growing importance of oil throughout the 1970s, brought the Alberta government into increasing conflict with the federal government. The PCs were able to identify themselves as the defenders of Alberta's interests, with the federal government as their real opposition. As well, due to oil revenues, they were able to decrease Alberta's income taxes to the lowest in the country while increasing program expenditures at the same time. The effect was to make the PC government incredibly popular and marginalize the opposition parties (Archer 1992, 115-121).

This was, of course, to have an impact on provincial elections. The PCs won a number of lop-sided victories, with the opposition parties having little presence in the Legislature.

> Elections during the 1975-1985 period developed a familiar pattern. The Conservative party obtained between 57 and 63 per cent of the votes and well over 90 per cent of the seats. In 1975 only six opposition members were elected, which declined to five in 1979 and four in 1982. The Conservatives' dominant position was undisputed (Archer 1992, 122).

In sum, "From 1971 to 1985, Peter Lougheed's Conservatives enjoyed one of the clearest periods of legislative dominance in Canadian history" (Archer 1992, 124). This degree of dominance was lost, however, after Lougheed resigned as premier.

In the fall of 1985 Don Getty was chosen as the new PC leader and Premier. Immediately, the electoral fortunes of the PC government began to decline. Getty called his first election for the spring of 1986. As one writer put it, "The 28 fateful days from April 10 to May 8, 1986 marked a watershed in Alberta political history. The Tories' heady years of one party rule under Peter Lougheed ended abruptly just seven months after his departure" (Pratt 1987, 103). The 1986 campaign led to the election of a sizeable opposition by Alberta standards. Whereas there had been only four opposition MLAs elected in 1982, 22 were elected in 1986. Matters only became worse for the PCs in the following election of 1989, with 24 opposition members being elected. In short, during this period there were two major developments: "the election of a significant legislative opposition with the New Democrats forming the official opposition on both occasions and a significant drop in the popular vote won by the governing

Conservatives" (Tupper 1991, 454). The decline in popularity seemed to continue through the early 1990s so that "By 1992, the Alberta Progressive Conservatives were in disarray" (Tupper 1996, 466). At that time one scholar commented, "Whether the party is able to forestall a further decline, and to reestablish itself as the dominant party, appears highly unlikely" (Archer 1992, 131).

There were a number of reasons for the PC decline under Don Getty. For one, "the Getty government presided over the collapse of major Alberta firms that had emerged and flourished with the assistance of the provincial government" (Taras and Tupper 1994, 64). Hundreds of millions of dollars were lost by the government in these businesses. The effect was to undercut the PCs' image of administrative competence and to erode confidence in the government's economic diversification strategy. Instead, the idea that government should stay out of the free market increasingly took hold. Another important reason for the decline in the PCs' popularity was the Getty government's "inability to deal effectively with the province's new fiscal and economic circumstances" (Taras and Tupper 1994, 64). Even before Getty took over, the price of oil had begun to decline, and as this continued, a major source of government revenue decreased substantially. With considerably less resource revenue, Getty was forced to increase taxes and cut government spending at the same time. In spite of this, the government still ran huge deficits, putting the province deeper in debt. Another disadvantage Getty faced was that he was not able to position himself as the defender of Alberta against a hostile federal government, as Lougheed had done. In 1984 the federal Progressive Conservatives were elected under the leadership of Brian Mulroney. Since every Alberta seat was held by the federal PCs, and the new government did not have designs on Alberta's petroleum revenues, the federal government was no longer seen by Albertans as explicitly in conflict with Alberta's interests (Tupper 1991, 459-460). Clearly, in comparison to Lougheed, Getty was not well positioned to generate massive support.

Thus the situation did look somewhat bleak for the Alberta PC government by 1992 and there were questions about its ability to stay in power. However, the selection of Ralph Klein as new party leader and premier unexpectedly led to the party's rejuvenation. Klein, the former mayor of Calgary and then provincial Environment Minister, faced his stiffest competition for the leadership from Nancy Betkowski, another cabinet minister. Whereas Betkowski was a moderate with her support strongest in Edmonton, "Klein positioned himself as an anti-establishment outsider" (Tupper 1996, 466). In a leadership selection process where all party members could vote, Betkowski led by only one vote on the first ballot, but lost to Klein by a substantial margin on the second. Klein received especially strong support in the rural areas of the province. "The coalition that came together to support Klein, and perhaps more importantly at the time to stop Betkowski, became the backbone of a transformed Conservative Party" (Taras and Tupper 1994, 67).

Becoming Premier in December 1992, Klein immediately got to work, making changes to distance himself from the previous PC administration.

> He started with the biggest, bloodiest purge in Alberta's political history. He reduced the size of cabinet from twenty-six to seventeen ministers, and in doing so he unceremoniously dismissed sixteen Getty ministers, including the five who had opposed him in the leadership race and all but two of the holdovers from the Lougheed period (Dabbs 1997, 100).

Another important change implemented by Klein was the abolition of MLA pensions. At the time that Klein came to power, Alberta's retirement benefits for MLAs was the most generous in the country. Many people believed that the retiring MLAs would be receiving way too much money. After an in-caucus fight, Klein abolished the pension plan for future MLAs and made retroactive cuts to those who were retiring. This created a major publicity boost for Klein. "In a single, dramatic act, the novice premier had closed the book on the Getty years, wiping the Tory slate clean and ensuring his own personal credibility and popularity" (Dabbs 1997, 109).

In the campaign for the election of June 1993, the province's financial situation was the major issue. Both the PCs and the Liberals called for major spending cuts. Once again, however, the PCs won the election, albeit with the fewest seats (51) since their 1971 victory (Tupper 1996, 467). Klein's victory was a surprise for many people.

> The scenario of six short months before had called for him to pilot the Progressive Conservatives to a stunning but expected defeat. Instead, as the returns rolled in, Klein buried the New Democratic Official Opposition and bulldozed the Liberals' vaunting ambitions, and Laurence Decore's career, into rubble (Dabbs 1997, 114).

It appears that Ralph Klein can be credited personally with re-establishing the popularity of the PC government in Alberta which had been on a downhill slide to apparently inevitable defeat. Klein's rise to power turned the party around. This involved changing the party to some degree: "Without losing power, the Alberta Conservatives have transformed themselves from an interventionist, managerial, urban oriented party to a laissez-faire and, self-defined, 'populist' party" (Tupper 1996, 470). In the process, the government changed its policies in a number of areas, in the effort to reduce expenditures. Although the Department of Education was affected by this, the direction of education policy basically continued along the lines that had been developed under Lougheed. While the Klein government superficially portrayed itself as making significant changes in education policy, the reality was that it was following a course set years before.

CONCLUSION

Even after considering views that the reduction of kindergarten funding amounted to a drastic policy change, that the PC government has not been consistently committed to improving educational standards, that Lougheed's education policy changes were society-driven, and that ideological influences and pressures to change the PC party image had significant impacts on the Klein government's policies, the thesis remains intact. The reduction in kindergarten funding does not amount to a policy reversal. A policy thrust contradicting the emphasis on stronger standards was properly adjusted. Evidence of society-driven pressure for education policy changes in the late 1970s is scant. And the ideological influences and image changes had no noticeable impact on education policy.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Throughout the thesis two points should have become clear. One, that the education policies of Ralph Klein's government have an essential continuity with the education policy established under the government of Peter Lougheed. Second, that the Lougheed government set a new direction in education policy due to the entirely new perspective it brought to its term in office. The direction and perspective were "new" in relation to the education policy of the previous Social Credit government. The Lougheed government's vision for education began to emerge clearly by the late 1970s and, once set, has continued to dominate the education policy of Premiers Don Getty and Ralph Klein. It was especially due to the influence of three key individuals -- Lougheed himself, Minister of Education Dave King, and Deputy Minister of Education Reno Bosetti -- that education policy took the form it did.

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, many commentators interpreted Ralph Klein's education policy as being a drastic change from the past. A few bold moves by Klein's government seem to provide support for that view. The government took back authority over the selection of superintendents. The number of school jurisdictions was dramatically reduced, while the power of school councils was strengthened. The jurisdictions which did remain virtually lost all control over education funding. A strong emphasis was laid on the need for high standards and regular testing. Teachers were forced to take a pay cut, while some government MLAs proposed bills that would in various ways weaken the teachers' union, the Alberta Teachers' Association. And perhaps most controversial of all, the government provided for the creation of up to 15 charter schools, a first for Canada.

While at first glance this array of initiatives does appear to represent a significant change in Alberta's education policy, a more careful analysis reveals otherwise. By the mid-1980s, the government was concerned about the proliferation of school jurisdictions and was publicly discussing the idea of assuming control over education funding. School councils were provided for in legislation and seen as a way to increase parental involvement in schools. An emphasis on the need to strengthen educational standards and a renewed commitment to testing were clearly evident in the government's thinking by the late 1970s. It was also during the 1970s that the government first discussed dividing the professional from the bargaining roles of the ATA, and after a bitter public dispute between the government and the ATA in 1985, at which time the government was accused of "union busting," a new organization was established for certifying teachers. Perhaps the strongest case for policy continuity is in the area of alternatives to traditional public education. Right from the outset of the PCs' first term in power, they have been favourable to private and quasi-private education. Allowing the creation of charter schools is a natural outgrowth of this tendency, and not a very radical outgrowth at that. The PC government has consistently been favourable to parental choice in education. The case for overall policy continuity seems to be strongly established.

Who, then, set the policy direction that would continue through the Klein period? Did the policy simply reflect societal trends? While governments do not exist in isolation from the society they govern, they can nevertheless act "autonomously" as Nordlinger has argued. Individuals holding the reigns of state power can direct policy in accordance with their views, independent or virtually independent of societal pressures. It does indeed appear that certain key individuals have been responsible for setting the direction of Alberta's education policy. Especially noteworthy has been the influence of Premier Peter Lougheed, Minister of Education Dave King, and Deputy Minister of Education Reno Bosetti.

THE ROLE OF PETER LOUGHEED

Much has already been noted about Peter Lougheed's interest and role in the direction of Alberta's education policy while he was Premier. His impact was especially marked in the Secondary Education Review. He spoke often about the themes of the review and, atypically, was present at the press conference releasing the policy document that resulted from the review. Clearly his influence on Alberta's education policy should not be downplayed.

While much has been written about Lougheed's strong leadership of Alberta, especially with regards to economic policy and federal-provincial relations, there is very little about his impact on education policy. This is perhaps excusable due to the seriousness of the issues related to the petroleum industry and constitutional affairs during Lougheed's term as Premier. However, it should not be interpreted as meaning that Lougheed was not interested in education policy. As Dave King pointed out in his interview, Lougheed was interested in what was going on in every government department. King told Allan Jamha that he was selected as Minister of Education because of Lougheed's interest in education.

> Peter Lougheed was personally interested in education, and he knew I was. We had worked together in one relationship or another since 1967, and he knew that some of my views on education and feeling about education were compatible with his. He wanted to see things happen and he wanted a risk-taker in the department at that time (in Jamha 1988, 156).

Indeed, Lougheed told his biographer David Wood, "Making our educational system stronger is one of the major things I want to do before I leave office" (in Wood 1985, 105).

Without repeating what has already been stated in previous chapters, notably chapters 3 and 5, Lougheed was concerned to have the government, rather than educational professionals, control education policy. As former Lougheed cabinet minister Roy Farran wrote in 1984, "Premier Peter Lougheed and his government have been saying for nearly 10 years that they are not prepared to surrender responsibility for education to the teachers (workers), or the trustees (local directors)" (1984, A8). Another Calgary Herald columnist, in criticizing Lougheed's views about education, wrote the following:

> Peter Lougheed ran a one-man show in Alberta for 14 years. If conventional wisdom is accurate -- and there is just too much confirmation of Lougheed's power as premier to deny its veracity -- nothing the Alberta government accomplished during those years escaped the unmistakeable stamp of this one man (Ford 1989, A4).

The point here is that Lougheed was responsible for the education policy changes made during his tenure as a result of his undisputed control over Alberta's government. Halvar Jonson, in his interview, said that Lougheed had to be credited for the degree of innovation in education policy: he gave it priority and established an atmosphere for change.

Premier Lougheed was strongly in control of his government, and it is unthinkable that education policy escaped his reach. While he was not personally directing education policy from the Premier's Office, at the very least he was strongly supportive of the initiatives of his Education Ministers.

THE ROLE OF DAVE KING

As Minister of Education, Dave King had an important impact on Alberta's education system. Among other things, his tenure saw the reintroduction of compulsory departmental exams, the creation and implementation of the Management and Finance Plan, the initial effort to rewrite the School Act, the Secondary Education Review, and the creation of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards. His period as Minister of Education was relatively long, 1979 - 1986, so in one sense it should not be surprising that much occurred while he held the position. But the degree of activity under his

Ministry was not simply the result of the long period of time; King was an especially activist Minister in the Education portfolio.

In my interview with him, King said he enjoyed being Minister of Education. He wanted to see things happen, and was determined that they would happen. He emphasized that he wasn't the originator of the ideas he promoted; rather, he ran with other people's good ideas. And he was not afraid to face the opposition of the education establishment. As he said, "education is too important to be left to educators." For an example he mentioned compulsory exams. The MACOSA report which recommended against compulsory exams, articulated the establishment's position. But he went ahead with compulsory exams because he himself thought they were a good idea. Public support for the exams was only "anecdotal," and he would have implemented them anyway because he liked the idea and Lougheed was supportive.

During King's tenure as Minister of Education various media commentators noted the significance of his role. In 1981 a Calgary Herald columnist wrote that King was proposing "educational reforms that would strike at the roots of the current education system if carried out." He had an "enthusiasm for challenging formal education's conventional wisdom." In sum, "King sees himself as a reformer. But for him, reform is achieved gradually by airing new (some would claim, outrageous) ideas and stimulating debate" (White 1981, A3). Later that same year, the Herald carried an editorial which made the same point. "King perceives the need for change and is working hard in seeking ways to accomplish it." The editorial referred to an apparent plan of King's "on what would amount to major structural and philosophical changes in Alberta's education system." This would involve "an obviously substantial reorganization of the education system from funding, to utilization, to philosophy to curriculum" (Calgary Herald 1981, A6).

Two years later, in 1983, an Edmonton Journal columnist discussed Dave King's efforts, saying King may be "the best thing to happen in years to provincial education,"

> Being expert in education means cherishing moderation in all things, appreciating the glacial slowness of institutional and professional change. Mr. King understands none of that. He doesn't see why Alberta can't simply have better education, so he charges ahead with rash and timely actions.
>
> He has said that the period before the last election was time for talk, while now is time for action. Educators had better stay alert. He means it (Martin 1983, B2).

Later, as an Edmonton Sun columnist, the same writer referred to King as "a man of vision" who was "brash and enterprising." As Education Minister, he had "accomplished quite a bit already" (Martin 1985, 11). After King was moved out of the Education portfolio, R. Glenn Martin, a University of Alberta education professor, wrote a glowing review of King's achievements. Most importantly, he noted that King "did much to shape a new era in Alberta schooling." Interestingly, Martin also realized that "[m]any of Dave King's initiatives are still in progress -- and vulnerable. They will have to be carefully birddogged if they're not to fall victim to forces anxious to undo King's seven years" (1986, 11). In fact these initiatives, such as the curriculum reform associated with the Secondary Education Review, and the new School Act, were brought to fruition as King's legacy carried into the future.

Realizing the extent of changes to Alberta's education system that he was involved with, it is likely that Dave King has been the most important Education Minister since William Aberhart. With King it seems that every aspect of the system was open for discussion and possible reorganization. Significant policy changes were indeed made or initiated in the areas of educational finance and governance, testing and standards, teacher certification, and alternatives to regular public schooling. King was not afraid to ruffle feathers or rock the boat. He pushed ahead with the ideas he thought were in the best interests of Alberta's education system. Of course, he couldn't have done so without the support of Premier Lougheed. In the interview, King saw it as notable that Lougheed left him alone to do what he was doing. He believed Lougheed trusted him to do what was right. Therefore King personally deserves much of the credit (or blame) for what occured while he was Minister of Education.

THE ROLE OF RENO BOSETTI

In my interview with Reno Bosetti, it became increasingly clear to me that he, too, had been a central player in Alberta's education policy during his tenure as Deputy Minister, 1982-1995. At the time the Deputy Minister position became open in Alberta Education in 1982, Bosetti was an Assistant Deputy Minister in Advanced Education. He recalls that when he applied for the Deputy Minister position, he made it clear that there were three conditions for him to accept. First, there would have to be a review of the nature and purpose of education with an emphasis on outcomes and evaluation. Second, there would have to be a review of program offerings that would focus programs on expected results. And third, there would have to be a review of the legislative framework for education that would lead to changes that would enable the government to govern, to use his terminology. The conditions were accepted and Bosetti became Deputy Minister. When it came to hiring a new Deputy Minister, Dave King told Allan Jamha, "I recommended three names to the Premier and indicated my preference. He accepted my preference and recommended Reno Bosetti to the Cabinet, and he was appointed deputy minister of education" (in Jamha 1988, 136).

It was immediately apparent to me that the three "conditions" stipulated by Bosetti foreshadowed the three main initiatives of education policy for the PC government in the 1980s. The Management and Finance Plan (MFP) was a new way of financing education in Alberta that would force the system to focus on outcomes and evaluation. Reno Bosetti claimed that he was the original author of the MFP, which was implemented in January 1984, and Dave King confirmed this in my interview with him. The Secondary Education Review corresponds to Bosetti's second condition, and the rewriting of the School Act corresponds to his third condition. It seems that much of the government's agenda in education from 1982 through the end of the decade may well have been set by one person -- Reno Bosetti.

Other researchers have also noted the central role of Reno Bosetti in education policy. Bohac wrote that Bosetti had a "personal agenda for change in the education system" (1989, 96). "The Deputy Minister had a megapolicy in mind which would lead to a policy based, results oriented education system. The megapolicy or master policy consisted of three components: legislative, curricular, and operational" (Bohac 1989, 95). Thus there were "three components of the Deputy Minister's megapolicy": the School Act Review (the legislative component), the Secondary Education Review (the curricular component), and the MFP (the operational component) (Bohac 1989, 126, 145).

Reno Bosetti's role is also confirmed by Gary Zatko, a high level Department of Education official during Bosetti's stint as Deputy Minister. Zatko notes that Bosetti was associated with a new policy direction for the department. "A major educational reform effort in Alberta started in the early 1980s. Reform was stimulated by the arrival of a new Deputy Minister of Education and a series of changes in the political, economic and social climate of the province" (1990, 1).

> At the outset of the reform started in 1982, Alberta Education aggresively pursued change from the top. Even though there was a tremendous amount of discussion and consultation with stakeholders, the department made it clear that the Minister of Education would establish the agenda for reform and make the final decisions. Subsequently, the 'new style and rhetoric' of the Minister, Deputy Minister, and other key Alberta Education senior staff resulted in stakeholders viewing the process as top-down. This made change more difficult, especially because the reform being discussed was perceived as a change in deeply held values (Zatko 1990, 21).

Zatko points to Bosetti as making a change in the role of "stakeholders" in the policy development process. Stakeholders had to take a back seat to the priorities of the department. Their agreement was no longer seen as crucial to the department.

> [B]efore 1982, there was a tradition of achieving consensus between Alberta Education and stakeholders before provincial decisions were made and

> implemented. This tradition changed. The new Deputy Minister in 1982 suggested that although stakeholder consensus was desirable, he would make a required decision if consensus was not attainable within a reasonable period of time (Zatko 1990, 27).

It seems that Bosetti was not only a central figure in determining education policy, but also the way policy was developed. The PC government's education policy in the 1980s was determined by people at the top, it was not initiated at a "grassroots" level, or among other stakeholder groups in the policy community. It was always "the people at the top" who provided strong leadership in developing Alberta's education policy, and certainly after 1982. When I asked Jim Dinning about Bosetti's role in education policy, Dinning replied that Bosetti had been "*extremely* influential." He then added, "and thank God for him!"

Reno Bosetti consciously saw a need for strong leadership in the development and implementation of policy and played that role in Alberta's education system. His views on leadership correspond to what one would expect from a person who acts as a strong leader. Bosetti has written that "[t]he importance of leadership cannot be over-emphasized, especially in times of change" (1993, 13).

> Leadership involves determining what must be done, and doing it. Important things will never get done if we wait for consensus. Decisions of any importance are often controversial, but controversy should not be an excuse to do nothing. To do nothing means to let others determine our course of action; to abdicate our responsibility (Bosetti 1993, 14).

This seems to be an appropriate description of the way Bosetti saw his role in education policy. He exercised strong leadership in the direction of Alberta's education system, and, given the free hand, was a crucial factor in the direction of education policy under the PC government.

THE "GREAT MAN THEORY" AND STATE AUTONOMY

While societal pressures cannot be completely discounted as influences on the direction of education policy, these three men seem largely to have determined the form that Alberta's education policy took. Less assertive individuals would likely have had less impact on the overall shape of policy. It is hard to imagine what Alberta's education system would be like today without the influence of Lougheed, King, and Bosetti. This, of course, sounds like a "Great Man Theory" of public policy.

No student of Alberta's political history should be adverse to an approach that stresses the impact of key individuals on the province's politics. William Aberhart, Ernest Manning, Peter Lougheed, and even Ralph Klein, are seen by credible analysts to have played vital roles in the direction of Alberta's electoral politics. It is unthinkable that Alberta would have followed the course it has without the presence of each of these men. As John Irving pointed out in his most detailed account of the rise of Social Credit in Alberta, Aberhart's leadership was a crucial factor:

> An emphasis on the profound and multivalent appeal of the philosophy of Social Credit to the people of Alberta must not obscure the importance of the leadership of William Aberhart as a major factor in the rise of the Social Credit movement. This factor has been stressed throughout this study. Aberhart brought to the movement his great prestige as an educationist and religious leader: it is doubtful if the movement would have won political power in Alberta without his leadership (Irving 1959, 337).

The fact that Social Credit endured long after Aberhart's death must largely be credited to another exceptional individual, Ernest Manning. John Barr, one of the "young Turks" of the latter Social Credit period, noted this in his history of the Social Credit government. From 1948 to 1968, "Ernest Manning stood over the public life of Alberta like a colossus. That anyone else could or should be premier -- or that any other party could or should gain power -- was, for many voters, unthinkable" (1974, 149).

> Social Credit's greatest strength . . . was the personality and image of its leader. Although Manning's paternalistic leadership style offended some, his tremendous moral stature, modesty, and obvious great ability combined with his privatism to produce an unbeatable mystique (Barr 1974, 152).

The leadership of Aberhart and Manning were essential factors in the rise to power and longevity of the Social Credit Party in Alberta.

Much the same can be said about the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a strong tradition of interpretation that sees the fall of Social Credit as an inevitable result of social and economic changes in Alberta, a society-centred account of the success of the PC Party. However, this approach fails to deal with key aspects of the PCs' growth and ultimate victory. Had the Social Credit Party chosen a dynamic and charismatic leader after the resignation of Ernest Manning in 1968, Alberta's political history may have been quite different. Instead, it was the PCs with Peter Lougheed who, through the strategy of alternative vision and the tactics of organization and finance, captured the imagination of many Alberta voters, enough, in any case, to bring the Social Credit period to an end. As Meir Serfaty writes, although factors such as the resignation of Ernest Manning were important for the PC electoral victory of 1971, "the most important factor" was "the fresh organization and image of the party brought about by the new leader, Peter Lougheed" (1981, 57). Edward Bell also sees the leadership of Peter Lougheed to be a key factor for the success of the PC Party.

> Although the impact of leadership on a party's fortunes is difficult to establish empirically, there are many celebrated instances where leadership is the only plausible explanation. To cite an Alberta example 20 years after this case [i.e., 1971], the provincial Conservatives under the leadership of Lougheed's successor, Donald Getty, were faring very poorly in the polls shortly before Getty's retirement, only to have a new leader, Ralph Klein, restore public confidence in the party and win another election in 1993. Examples of leadership making a crucial difference are legion in politics; there is no reason to preclude this explanation for the case at hand (1993, 472-473).

Indeed, Lougheed's leadership was essential for the PC victory of 1971, and as Bell points out, Klein's leadership was essential for the party's survival in 1993. In his victory speech after the 1993 election, Premier Klein referred to the "miracle on the prairie." As David Stewart notes, "[t]he miracle was the perpetuation in government of a party mired at 18 percent in the public opinion polls only months before the election.

Unquestionably, the agent of the miracle was Ralph Klein" (1995, 34). Certain "great men" seem repeatedly to have determined the course of Alberta's electoral politics.

While public policy is quite different from electoral politics, it should not be too much to say that if key individuals are crucial to the latter that they can also play a vital role in the former. Leadership is not exclusive to elections. Powerful political personalities make themselves felt between elections through the direction of government policy. Lougheed's role in Alberta's economic policies, and Klein's deficit-cutting policies stand out as clear examples of this. It is not too much to say that education policy was also driven by strong leaders. This is not to suggest that all policy is always driven by assertive political leaders, but such was the case for the policy arena studied here.

The leadership of key individuals in the direction of policy is what "state autonomy" is all about. Rather than following the lead of public opinion, public policy follows the path determined by the views of those in power. The new direction for education policy under the Lougheed government was of this nature. Determined individuals can have, and in this case did have, a significant impact on the shape of public policy. This is in spite of, or in addition to, the pressures exerted from society.

The education policy initiatives undertaken by Premier Klein's government were largely continuous with the policies of the two previous PC administrations, and did not hive off in a significantly new direction as some commentators have asserted. The basic change in the direction of Alberta's education policy took place while Peter Lougheed was premier, largely due to the influence of Lougheed, Dave King, and Reno Bosetti. Bosetti held his Deputy Minister position from 1982 to 1995, and his continuing influence probably had much to do with the continuity of policy from the Lougheed to the Klein administration. At least in education policy, then, Alberta had a "Lougheed Revolution" rather than a "Klein Revolution."

IMPLICATIONS AND INFERENCES

The education policy change undertaken by Ralph Klein's government was portrayed by the government, the government's critics, and the media, as being a dramatic departure from the past. As this thesis has demonstrated, however, that change exhibited considerable continuity with the past. Why was there such a discrepancy between the true nature of the change and how it was presented by all parties? In each case there was an incentive to over-emphasize the discontinuity between the Klein policy and previous PC policy.

From the government's perspective, it was important to emphasize that Ralph Klein was different from his predecessors. While the PCs had been in power for more than 20 years before Klein became premier, he found it necessary to claim that his administration was making a significant break with the previous administration. This was a useful tactic to rebuild support for the PC Party by claiming it had changed in important ways. While Klein's policies in other areas may well have taken a significantly different direction, this was not the case with basic education although it too, as part of the package, was presented as such. Klein's opponents also over-emphasized the nature of the change in education policy as a way of rallying opposition to change and to the Klein government generally. If some of the critics were to be believed, Klein was about to privatize or dismantle the entire public education system. The media, too, could benefit by emphasizing the degree of change since controversy creates more public interest in the story.

When the interests of the government, its critics, and the media, coincide in presenting an issue in a certain way it should not be surprising that the issue becomes generally to be perceived that way. This provides a reason to be cautious about the way policy change is publicly presented and privately interpreted. Relatively incremental change may be portrayed as radical, thus misleading the public, for ends other than policy substance. In this, partisan positioning comes to mind.

In reference to the literature of political science, this thesis provides substantial grounds for the idea of state autonomy in public policy. In particular, the thesis provides evidence that interest groups cannot necessarily thwart a determined government, that it matters which political party is in power, and that it matters which individuals hold formal power in that regime.

The ATA is, and has been for decades, a powerful and highly institutionalized interest group. During the Social Credit years there was little the government would do in education policy without the ATA's support. However, that changed after the PCs came to power. Especially by the late 1970s, the PC government was willing to undertake education policies in the face of direct ATA opposition. The government's favourable stance towards private education and the creation of COATS are good examples of this. In spite of its power, the ATA could not control the education policy arena. Rather, it was a determined provincial government that set education policy, regardless of the ATA's opposition. Once again, the activity of the PC government provides strong evidence for the state autonomy thesis.

Do parties make a difference in public policy? The evidence from this study suggests they do. This supports the state autonomy thesis the following way: if policy were simply the result of societal factors being translated into government activity, it would matter little which party were in power since the party cannot control the demands arising from society. But if a change in the party in power can lead to a fairly direct change in policy, as is suggested here, and one which can be sustained over time, this will indicate that more than societal factors were involved. Thus parties can make a difference, and they do so because there is a degree of state autonomy.

It also matters who is in power. In other words, leaders make a difference. Unfortunately, as Les Pal has written, "the study of public policy has taken almost no serious account of leadership" (1988, 16). However, he points out that this is beginning to change. He notes that "the state autonomy thesis reopens the question of a specific political realm, separate from larger socio-economic determinants" (1988, 19), and this, of course, leads to questions about the impact of leadership itself. In his view, leadership must play a role.

> It is people, after all, who make policy, people with different personalities and talents. Leaders are not merely amusing themselves with empty rituals; they are trying to shape events. While the results may vary, their efforts must invariably have some effect (1988, 16).

Leaders can have some effect, and as in the case studied here, they can have a big effect. Leaders do matter, especially as they are prepared to deploy determined and focused deputies to discharge their policy intent. Thus the nature of political leadership should receive greater attention in the public policy literature in the future. And if leaders do have an effect, then it is clear that the state autonomy thesis is also largely valid. For leaders to make a difference, the state must be able to act independently of societal factors.

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Hon. Robert Clark, September 29, 1997, Edmonton, Alberta

Hon. Jim Dinning, April 15, 1998, Calgary, Alberta

Dr. David Flower, November 13, 1997, Edmonton, Alberta

Hon. Halvar Jonson, October 1, 1997, Edmonton, Alberta

Dr. Bernie Keeler, February 20, 1998, Edmonton, Alberta

Hon. David King, September 17, 1997, Edmonton Alberta

APPENDIX A

MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION UNDER THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERMENT

Premiers

1971 - 1985	Peter Lougheed
1985 - 1992	Donald Getty
1992 -	Ralph Klein

Ministers of Education

1971 - 1975	Lou Hyndman
1975 - 1979	Julian Koziak
1979 - 1986	Dave King
1986	Neil Webber
1986 - 1988	Nancy Betkowski
1988 - 1992	Jim Dinning
1992 - 1996	Halvar Jonson
1996 -	Gary Mar

Deputy Ministers

1971 - 1972	R.E. Rees
1972 - 1982	E.K. Hawkesworth
1982 - 1995	Reno Bosetti
1995 - 1997	Leroy Sloan
1997 -	Roger Palmer